



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

February 28, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of Interior
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretaries Perdue and Zinke:

I am writing to express my support for a mineral withdrawal in the Methow Headwaters, which is located in my District, the 4th District of Washington. I respectfully request your agencies move swiftly to complete the environmental review process currently underway. I ask that all necessary reviews be completed by the end of the two-year segregation period, December 30, 2018.

The proposed withdrawal is entirely consistent with Department of Interior (DOI) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiatives to create a conservation stewardship legacy, promote agriculture and rural prosperity, and to be a good neighbor. I wholeheartedly support your commitments to build robust, sustainable communities for generations to come, and I believe the Methow Headwaters mineral withdrawal will aid this effort in Central Washington.

The Methow Valley lies in the northwestern portion of my District and serves as the eastern gateway to the North Cascades National Park. The area is known for its expansive scenic vistas, agriculture, fishing and hunting, significant acreage of public lands, year-round recreational opportunities, and rural character. There has been near unanimous and bipartisan support in the Valley for the Methow Headwaters mineral withdrawal. From the local Chamber of Commerce and more than 135 businesses to tribal nations, hunters and anglers, sportsmen groups, farmers, and current and former state and local elected officials, this proposal has gained broad-based support. In a county that embraces resource development and has a long history of mining, it is widely recognized that this specific proposal for the Methow Valley has merit.

In December of 2016, the Department of the Interior initiated a two-year segregation period for a mineral withdrawal of the Methow Headwaters. During this period, your agencies are evaluating a proposed 20-year mineral withdrawal and must recommend final action by the end of 2018. It is with this in mind that I would like to specifically request the following of your agencies:

- (1) The Department of Interior issue a Federal Register notice for the non-decisional public meeting required per Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA). The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) regulations under 43 CFR 2310 outline the process for meeting this statutory requirement under FLPMA. This public meeting must be held in order for the U.S. Forest Service's mineral withdrawal recommendation to move through the review process at BLM and DOI. This meeting will provide the public with the opportunity to comment on the proposed action as well as have questions answered by agency personnel. I respectfully request the Department to publish a Public Meeting Notice as soon as possible.
- (2) The U.S. Forest Service complete the required environmental review and promptly submit a final recommendation for a 20-year mineral withdrawal of the 340,079-acre Methow Headwaters region to the Bureau of Land Management. I understand the U.S. Forest Service recently completed the scoping period and received overwhelming public support for the mineral withdrawal.
- (3) The Department of Interior review the final recommendation by the U.S. Forest Service before the end of the two-year segregation period, December 30, 2018.

I look forward to working with the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to move the Methow Headwaters mineral withdrawal forward this year. There is a critical deadline of December 30, 2018, and key milestones to meet along the way. I welcome the opportunity to work closely with your respective offices on this important and widely supported effort. On behalf of Washington State's 4th Congressional District, thank you for your leadership on this issue.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Congressman Dan Newhouse