



The Mountain Pact on Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke's Exit

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Durango, Colorado (December 15, 2018) – *The following statement is from Anna Peterson, Executive Director, The Mountain Pact:*

Since Ryan Zinke stepped into the Department of Interior nearly two years ago, he has been busy dismantling environmental protections while prioritizing energy development on our public lands - all while cutting the public out of decision making processes. Zinke and his Interior Department have rolled back common-sense environmental safeguards, and time and again ignored voices from mountain communities that rely on healthy, well-managed public lands for economic stability, outdoor recreation, and cultural vitality.

Many of us in mountain towns see that Secretary Zinke's so-called "energy dominance" agenda has tilted the scales too heavily toward exploitation, putting the American people at risk. Our federal lands currently produce nearly 25% of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States. In the Western U.S., we are already experiencing decreased snowpack, increased drought, as well as lengthening and intensifying fire seasons, all of which will get even worse if we continue to abuse our public lands at current rates.

We urge his replacement to be a good neighbor to Western communities — to steer away from an “energy dominance” at all costs mindset, to listen and respect voices for mountain communities, and to minimize threats to clean air, water, natural areas, wildlife, and wild places that make our communities so special. The future of our families, communities, and our public lands depend on it.

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[The Mountain Pact](#) is an effort to educate, mobilize, and empower mountain towns with outdoor recreation-based economies in the American West around federal policy. We work with local elected officials in nearly 50 mountain communities from all 11 western states to build resilience in the face of environmental stresses and their economic impacts through a shared voice on policies related to climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation.

Mountain Communities for Environmental & Economic Resilience

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