

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write concerning Representative Rob Bishop's letter of October 17 to you requesting information regarding current administrative mineral withdrawals. In his letter, Rep. Bishop once again singles out the Southwest Oregon Mineral Withdrawal (withdrawal), Public Land Order 7859. As you recall, Rep. Bishop previously wrote you and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Perdue on September 28, 2017 (attached) regarding the withdrawal. We followed up to you about his letter (attached) on November 14, 2017, noting that Representative Bishop's letter contained factual errors and flawed assumptions.

In February 2018, Secretary Perdue responded to our letter (attached) and agreed that it was a closed matter. He stated, "...with the publication of Public Land Order 7859, the Southwestern Oregon Mineral Withdrawal moved from a proposed withdrawal to a completed one. Therefore, the Forest Service has no plans to revisit it prior to its expiration or absent Congressional direction otherwise." We request that you concur with Secretary Perdue's decision and put this matter to rest.

As you know, the withdrawal was completed on December 30, 2016 under the authority of Section 1741(c) of the Federal Lands Policy Management Act. The administrative withdrawal was conducted "in aid of legislation," the Southwest Oregon Watershed and Protection Act (H.R. 682 and S. 346 in the 114th Congress). Our offices continue to work to pass this important legislation.

In his October 17, 2018 letter, Representative Bishop notes that repealing the withdrawal will fulfill the "...need to provide for the economic and national security of our nation." Repealing Public Land Order 7859 would achieve neither. The withdrawal encompasses areas located at the headwaters of several cherished National Wild and Scenic Rivers, known as "America's Wild Rivers Coast." Commercial fishing and sport-fishing based tourism are economic drivers for Oregon coastal communities, and the recreation-based businesses in the area are strong supporters of the withdrawal. Additionally, as noted in our November 2017 letter, the Bureau of Land Management found that the withdrawal area did not hold "significant" minerals. None of these facts have changed since December 2016 when the withdrawal was completed.

When announcing a twenty-year administrative mineral withdrawal near Yellowstone National Park on October 8, 2018, you stated, "There are places where it is appropriate to mine and places where it is not." We believe, as do local communities, businesses, and stakeholders

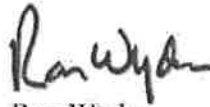
that the Southwest Oregon mineral withdrawal protects lands and rivers that have nationally significant public value and would be put at risk by mineral development. We strongly urge you to uphold Public Land Order 7859.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

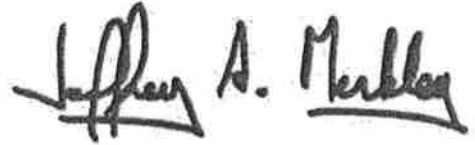
Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator

Cc: The Honorable Sonny Perdue