

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 10, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

We write to congratulate you on your successful confirmation by the Senate and becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> Secretary of Interior. As the manager of the nation's public lands, the Interior Department is constantly challenged to navigate the appropriate course through the often competing demands to facilitate mineral development and preserve and protect the natural environment. We encourage you to rely upon your excellent scientific team to help inform the decision making process and strive always to take the long view of what is right for future generations.

In this regard, we were initially heartened by the Bureau of Land Management's decision last May to update its decades-old regulations governing hydraulic fracturing under federal leases, including public, private, and Indian lands. Unfortunately, the first draft proposed by the Bureau was, while a step in the right direction, too weak to protect American drinking water or give the public confidence that the right standards would be put in place. Earlier this year prior to your nomination, the Interior Department announced that it would re-propose the rule and open it to public comment again. In order to ensure that oil and gas fracking under federal leases is held to the highest standard, we believe this rule must be strengthened before it is published in its final form. The bureau has a responsibility to protect both public health and the environment from the impacts of drilling and fracking on our public lands and near drinking water sources. If strengthened, this rule could go a long way to ensuring this protection.

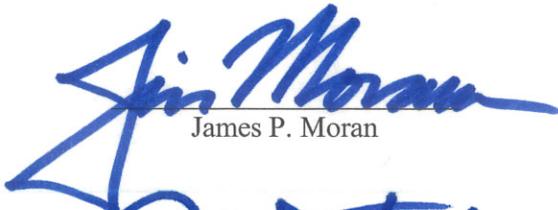
The initial proposal in 2012 had three components: chemical disclosure, well integrity and produced water management. With regard to chemical disclosure, BLM should include a pre-fracturing disclosure requirement. Advance notice would allow people living on or near drilling sites the opportunity to complete baseline water tests. These tests are important to document changes in water quality and determine if contamination has occurred. States like Wyoming already have advance disclosure provisions and have not seen a drop-off in industry activity.

For well integrity, the BLM did propose new tests for mechanical integrity but failed to update its well construction requirements. As BP's Deepwater Horizon clearly demonstrated failure to ensure well integrity can lead to disasters. On land, problems in well construction are often the pathways for groundwater contamination. BLM should hold industry to the highest standards.

Produced water management was addressed in the 2012 draft by banning the use of unlined pits for storage. But even lined pits leak and spills have been connected to ground and surface water contamination, as well as air pollution and wildlife deaths. The BLM should follow the lead of New Mexico and North Dakota, which are moving away from the use of open pits all together for storage.

As shale oil and gas development and the use of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling extends to more parts of this country, BLM, given its historical experience overseeing oil and gas development, should be the gold standard for all states to follow. We urge you to ensure that the BLM's fracking rule is finalized in a timely manner and strengthened appropriately.

Sincerely,



James P. Moran



Paul Tonko



Barbara Lee



Michael M. Honda



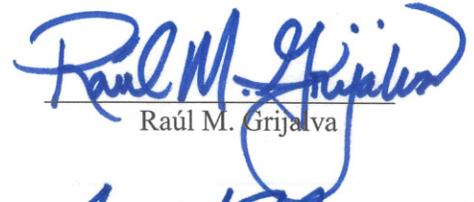
Jared Polis



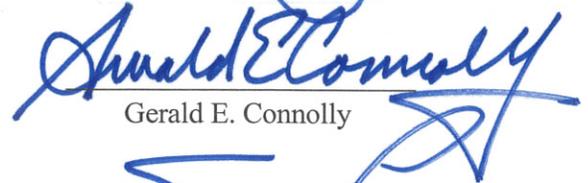
Betty McCollum



Keith Ellison



Raúl M. Grijalva



Gerald E. Connolly



Sam Farr



Jared Huffman



Adam B. Schiff



Alan S. Lowenthal



Niki Tsongas

  
Matthew A. Cartwright

  
Daniel Lipinski

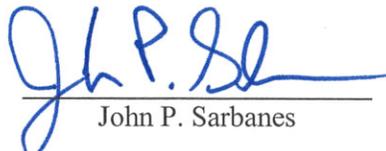
  
Alan Grayson

  
Earl Blumenauer

  
Anna G. Eshoo

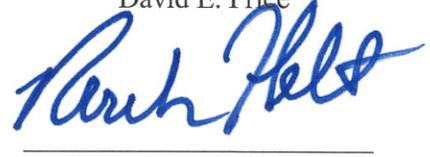
  
Alcee L. Hastings

  
Tim Ryan

  
John P. Sarbanes

  
Nita M. Lowey

  
David E. Price

  
Rush Holt

  
Chellie Pingree

  
Judy Chu

  
Maxine Waters

  
Chris Van Hollen