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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 13, 2018

VICE CHAIR AND PARLIAMENTARIAN
STEERING AND POLICY

PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE WHIP

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COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I am writing to convey the concerns that many of my constituents have brought to me regarding the opening of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Many of these concerns from Colorado residents and community organizations stem from the testing conducted on the former nuclear weapons facility site.

Congress originally authorized the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act in 2001, before cleanup at the facility had been completed. Contaminant testing of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (“Refuge”) property is more than a decade old and does not take into account flooding. Unanticipated and significant climate events, including a massive flood in 2013, have changed the topography at the Refuge. It is critical to evaluate what impact the floods had on possible contamination from the adjoining Superfund site, centrally located within the Refuge.

I am following up on my constituents’ request that the Department of the Interior (DOI) complete further testing of air, water, and soil at the Refuge site by March 2019, and that until further testing has been completed, the Refuge site remain unopen to the public. Testing should consider the safety of construction workers, proposed staff, and future visitors given the impact of the flooding.

The health and safety of construction workers, staff, and visitors must remain a top priority. I encourage the DOI to favorably consider my constituents’ request to conduct the necessary testing process as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jared Polis
Member of Congress