

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

We write to you with extreme concern that America's energy dominance is being limited by unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy. As you may know, over 80 percent of Nevada's land is managed by federal agencies. Our economic vibrancy depends on timely, clear, and reliable federal land management decisions. However, since the release of the Department of the Interior (DOI) memo entitled "*Departmental Review Procedures for Decisions, Actions, Consultations, and Other Undertakings Related to Wind and Solar Energy Facilities*" on July 15th, numerous energy projects are experiencing a freeze in approvals – this is especially true for critical solar development across Nevada.

This July 15th memo establishes that "all decisions, actions, consultations, and other undertakings ... related to wind and solar energy facilities shall require submission to the Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs, subsequent review by the Office of the Deputy Secretary, and final review by the Office of the Secretary" [emphasis ours]. We are concerned this memo is meant to intentionally hinder the deployment of renewable energy projects on our public lands, and we question its necessity, especially considering this memo only applies to wind and solar energy facilities rather than all forms of energy production. We are also concerned that the impacts of this memo extends beyond federal lands to any private project that requires approvals at the federal level, such as for transmission right-of-way permits, thus placing even more projects potentially at risk of either being delayed or cancelled altogether.

To build and operate a solar or wind facility on public lands is already a long, complicated, and expensive process because of permitting-related bottlenecks. Currently, a utility scale renewable energy project can take anywhere from five to seven years from inception to completion, often longer. The new addition of secretarial approval further burdens an already bottlenecked process and harms one of the fastest-growing sources of electric power in a time of increasing energy demand.

Over the past five years, over 80 percent of new domestic energy generation came from solar and wind. While traditional energy sources still account for a majority of U.S. electricity, their share has fallen from 72 percent in 2001 to 58 percent today – proving that renewable energy sources are taking on a vital role in meeting national energy supply. Yet, by adding new permitting hurdles, the Department risks choking this progress and ceding global energy dominance to China, whose "all of the above" strategy has allowed their economy to grow rapidly. By the end of 2024, China added 277 gigawatts of solar, 79 gigawatts of wind, and 40 gigawatts of energy storage compared to roughly 60 gigawatts total across all energy generation types in the United States. For the United States to achieve true domestic energy dominance, we must embrace this all-of-the-above strategy that prioritizes both energy security and innovation.

Nevada is already leading by example. With unparalleled solar potential, the state currently produces 41 percent of its annual power through renewable sources. The solar industry supports roughly 30,000 jobs, which is more jobs per capita than any other industry in Nevada and has attracted over \$13.3 billion in investments for the construction and installation of solar facilities. According to NV Energy's Integrated Resource Plan, the state anticipates roughly 10 gigawatts of additional electricity demand over the next decade, driven largely by the onshoring of energy-intensive industries such as data centers and critical mineral mining, processing, and refining. Much of this demand is expected to be met by solar energy, with over 130,000 megawatts of new capacity projected to come online by 2030. Nevada's success demonstrates what is possible when regulatory clarity aligns with opportunity.

Yet, DOI's July 15th memo has brought that progress to a halt. The memo provides no guidance or practical instructions to agency staff on how to implement this new permitting process. To our knowledge, not a single solar or wind project in any state has received approval under the new guidance.

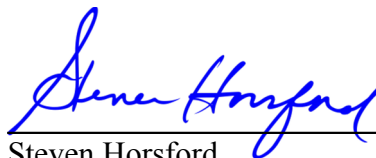
These policies are paralyzing hundreds of billions of dollars in investment, state and local tax revenue, and thousands of high-paying jobs. They threaten utilities' ability to procure power, which will drive electricity costs higher. It has been 97 days since the memo was issued, yet DOI has provided no transparency on when or how project decisions might move forward. Energy development in the West is effectively at a standstill, putting broader economic growth — including in mining, data centers, and manufacturing — at risk.

The United States is facing an impending energy crisis. Electricity demand is rising rapidly, yet the energy grid is unprepared. DOI's July 15th memo does not "unleash energy dominance;" it weaponizes the permitting process against it. If the Department is serious about an all-of-the-above energy strategy, it must ensure that both traditional and renewable energy resources can be developed efficiently and responsibly.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Susie Lee
Member of Congress