

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our continued support for a fully functioning Bureau of Land Management (BLM) headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado.

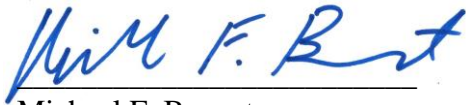
Early on in the Trump Administration, the Department of the Interior (DOI) indicated that it would move the BLM Headquarters to a western state. This announcement led states and cities across the West to believe that hundreds of employees would move to a single city, improving BLM's customer service and public land management.

Throughout the Trump Administration's search for a new headquarters location, we expressed support for and encouraged a move to Colorado for many reasons. The BLM's multiple-use mission aligns closely with the values of Coloradans who use our public land – whether for hiking, grazing, hunting, mountain biking, or resource development. We felt that a headquarters in Grand Junction would provide BLM leadership the opportunity to live, work, and recreate on the Western Slope. It simply makes sense that the public servants who manage our public lands should live among the natural resources they oversee. When combined with sufficient resources, experienced leadership, and proper priorities, such a move could improve agency decision making.

In July 2019, then-Secretary Bernhardt announced that the BLM headquarters would move to Grand Junction, Colorado and just over a year later the DOI signed an order formalizing this move. Despite these important and symbolic steps, the Trump Administration did not follow through on their commitment to Grand Junction. The BLM assigned only 41 senior staff positions to relocate to Grand Junction, positions that they had to rush to fill at the end of 2020. While this is a reasonable start and is appreciated by the Western Slope, the job is far from finished. When the DOI announced the scaled down move, the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel commented, "A day after feeling like this was a game-changer for Grand Junction, the letdown is palpable. We're stuck between feeling grateful that Grand Junction will be known as the BLM's Western Headquarters and frustrated that such a distinction has been hollowed out to its barest impact." We share these sentiments. Now more than ever the BLM must work at its highest capacity as climate change drives more catastrophic wildfires and severe drought across the West.

We continue to support a full BLM headquarters in Grand Junction. We believe that such an effort must be more than symbolic and must include the staff and resources to improve management and protect our public land. A full headquarters in Colorado would not only grow the Western Colorado economy, but also send an important signal that rural America is an appropriate place for such a prestigious institution. Therefore, we encourage you to work with the bipartisan members of the Colorado delegation and other congressional leaders to find a path forward for the BLM headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael F. Bennet in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of John Hickenlooper in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator