



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 18, 2024

CONTACT: Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director, gwen@westernleaders.org, 505-469-0380
Jessica Pace, Program Coordinator, jess@westernleaders.org, 615-294-2049

BLM PUBLIC LANDS RULE WILL HELP ACHIEVE NATIONAL CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GOALS

Today, the Department of the Interior has taken a significant step toward protecting public lands and cultural resources. The new rule, released under the Bureau of Land Management, not only advances the Biden administration’s national climate and environmental justice goals but also underscores the administration's commitment to these crucial issues.

The [BLM Conservation and Landscape Health rule](#) updates existing land management protocols to place conservation on an equal footing with extractive resource development. It also gives the agency clearer authority to prioritize public land health and climate resilience on BLM lands.

“Public lands are central to the economies and health of our western communities. We commend Interior Secretary Debra Haaland and BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning for championing a rule that facilitates energy transition and prioritizes communities disproportionately impacted by our warming climate,” **said Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director of Western Leaders Network.** “This historic rule helps achieve the BLM’s mandate to balance competing uses by putting conservation on a level playing field with extractive industries like mining and drilling. Local, tribal and state elected officials across the Interior West stand ready to collaborate with the BLM to implement the rule in a way that prioritizes tribal consultation and partnerships, builds climate resilience, and works toward just transition.”

The implementation of BLM's Public Lands Rule will advance the Biden administration’s America the Beautiful agenda, which includes the science-driven objective of conserving 30% of the nation’s lands and waters by 2030 to mitigate the effects of climate change. The rule will also advance the administration’s Justice40 Initiative to ensure that at least 40% of new climate investments are made in communities that have historically lacked sufficient funds to address

pollution caused by mining and drilling operations, transition to clean energy economies, build and maintain clean water infrastructure, and develop sustainable housing solutions.

By placing conservation on an equal footing with other uses of BLM's 245 million acres of public lands, the agency will be in a better position to effectively manage different interests and ensure the conservation of wildlife habitat, protection of cultural integrity, and restoration of lands and waters that are increasingly compromised by climate change.

Western Leaders Network is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to harnessing the power of local, tribal and state elected officials across the Interior West. Its mission is to advance energy transition, promote clean air and water initiatives, and protect democracy.