



ASLA NEW MEXICO

March 4, 2021

Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Secretary Haaland,

The New Mexico Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (NMASLA) extends its sincere congratulations on your historic confirmation as United States Secretary of the Interior. We are excited for your tenure as you take your place in President Biden's Cabinet.

At a time when climate action is critical, our recreational infrastructure is failing, and environmental inequities continue to exacerbate socioeconomic disparities, the U.S. Department of the Interior has a unique opportunity to comprehensively address these critical issues while also achieving its mission of protecting our Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. As you so eloquently stated in 2017, "We must shift our thinking away from short-term gain toward long-term investment and sustainability, and always have the next generations in mind with every decision we make." We agree with your assessment—if the management of our public lands is to successfully address climate change, we must create a model that has an immediate positive impact on the health of our natural systems while providing a mechanism to transition away from the traditional energy development associated with public lands. Bold action on clean energy development, land conservation, mitigation projects, and supporting the outdoor recreation industry are key components of this critical economic transition.

Landscape architects have extensive experience planning and designing for land conservation, mitigating the effects of climate change through innovative design, outdoor recreation, and more. With leading roles in the development of parks, trails, and climate change mitigation projects across the state, we are proud of the work of landscape architects in New Mexico. Landscape architects are also advocates for policies that help support these important priorities. Our project and policy expertise make us well-suited to work with you to achieve the innovative planning and design solutions necessary to complement the administration's bold vision.

In the past you provided critical leadership on the Great American Outdoors Act, securing full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and addressing the National Park maintenance backlog. Your leadership will be integral to expediting the distribution of these funds so that communities across the United States can benefit. Landscape Architects are ready to assist with the planning and design of these important projects.

As part of the broad constituency of landscape architects both in New Mexico and across the nation, thank you for being a champion for clean energy, outdoor recreation, and the protection of our air, land, and water. Congratulations again on your confirmation, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Respectfully,

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