

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2022

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Haaland,

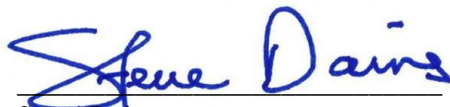
In March of 2021, we led over sixty Members of the Senate and Congressional Western Caucuses in a letter reiterating our commitment to conservation but raising concerns and requesting more information on the direction and intent behind the Biden Administration's 30-by-30 initiative, since re-branded as "*America the Beautiful*." In the void of answers to our questions, much less a concrete implementation plan, the caucuses developed and submitted an alternative approach: the *Western Conservation Principles*. Today marks one year since we submitted this document, but shockingly we have no more information now than we did then.

As we have warned in the past, the lack of information and transparency leads many Westerners to fear the "*America the Beautiful*" initiative is at best, a thoughtless approach to conservation, and at worst, a top-down land-grab. In contrast, the *Western Conservation Principles* document provided a clear standard for measuring the health and resiliency of our ecosystems, proposed concrete policies to achieve these goals, and ensured everyone had a seat at the table. That is why our alternative approach received the support from a broad array of stakeholders ranging from environmental non-profits to industry to local governments to the agriculture and forestry sectors.

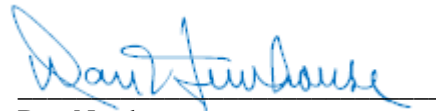
Healthy and resilient landscapes are the cornerstone of our western way of life. Those who are closest to the land, whose quality and way of life is dependent upon the land, have the most at stake. Rural Americans take pride in managing our resources for the betterment of the environment, surrounding communities, and future generations. The continued alienation of key constituencies and lack of transparency is not in the best interest of our conservation goals.

Again, we request you and other relevant Departments provide more information to the public on "*America the Beautiful*" and request a briefing in the month of October with Senate and Congressional Western Caucus member offices. We also respectfully urge you to re-focus your initiative with the *Western Conservation Principles* in mind.

Sincerely,



Steve Dalnes  
United States Senator



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Vilsack, U.S. Department of Agriculture