



February 3, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

The American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA), the national association for companies that specialize in cultural resources management (CRM), expresses its strong support for the nomination of Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior.

ACRA member firms undertake much of the CRM studies and investigations mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and employ thousands of CRM professionals, including archaeologists, architectural historians, historians and an increasingly diverse group of other specialists. Using free market business practices, ACRA firms deploy skilled teams to serve clients and communities while fulfilling ethical, professional, and legal commitments to cultural resources and the public. Their work empowers communities with a voice in development and regulatory processes.

The Department of Interior oversees some of our Nation's most cherished natural and cultural resources. As the steward of one fifth of the land in the United States, the Department plays a central role in the preservation of historic districts, sites, buildings, objects and cultural properties. It faces unique challenges, from the aging of National Park facilities to the pressure for energy and infrastructure development on federal lands. The Department is home to thousands of dedicated civil servants who work tirelessly to protect our national resources and preserve our nation's cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the Department has been badly impacted in recent years by personnel decisions that reduced capacity, depleted institutional memory, left vacancies unfilled, damaged morale and created inefficiencies.

Congresswoman Haaland's background and record make her uniquely qualified to lead this Department. As Vice Chair of the Committee on Natural Resources and Chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, Representative Haaland has been a champion for cultural resource management and giving the public a voice in protecting our shared national heritage. As a businesswoman and an advocate for the environment, Haaland understands the importance of balancing preservation with economic growth. As a member of the Laguna Pueblo, she will bring unique insight into the operation and management of that agency.

The Honorable Joe Manchin III and the Honorable John Barrasso
February 3, 2021
Page 2

The Department of Interior has an enormous impact on Native American tribes. Yet, in its 172-year history, neither it nor any other Cabinet department has been led by a Native American. Representative Haaland's historic nomination will give a powerful voice at the highest levels of government to the millions of people whose ancestors first settled this continent.

We urge the Senate to approve Deb Haaland's nomination as Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Boyless', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Nathan Boyless
President

cc: Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee