

March 7, 2025

Dear Secretary Burgum:

On behalf of our members, supporters, and volunteer stewards, we write to share concerns regarding the nationwide termination of federal lease arrangements by the Department of the Interior. Several lease terminations published earlier this week will eliminate visitor centers and other facilities valued by the American public. Additionally, some terminations will cripple many nonprofit public lands partners by revoking their office, storage, and retail locations and thereby reduce their philanthropic and educational support to their agencies. We ask you and agency Directors to immediately pause the lease terminations to conduct a thorough review.

We appreciate the transparency of the publication of the list of properties that will be impacted by the termination of lease arrangements and understand the desire of the White House to minimize the federal footprint. However, while reviewing the list with our members and partner organizations caught in the wide sweep are properties of the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that are critical and if terminated will force federal employees and non-profit partners alike to be without locations to serve the public.

This loss of properties will have devastating ripple effects from the protection and management of these lands to causing economic impacts and decreasing revenue generation for public lands. In some cases non-profit partners for agencies will immediately need to cut program staff due to the leases being canceled. For one lease, a NPS location would be closed that has over 70,000 visitors a year and 12 jobs cut.

In one remote location that is slated to be cut, a park's only facility that houses offices, equipment, and revenue generating retail space would be gone with no alternatives available. Another remote location that is being cut without appropriate alternatives houses offices and staff for more than one agency and four parks; including superintendents, senior staff, law enforcement, compliance, trail crews, and revenue generating retail space. For one location being cut, it functions as an agency unit that is funded as a line item in the federal budget that its existence is mandated by law.

These are just a few examples relayed by members across the country. There is no way to manage these public lands without these locations.

While we certainly understand the need for efficiency in contracts and multi-utilization of properties, we would request a thorough review before widespread termination of leases. We would welcome the opportunity to learn more about how the Department is assessing the downstream impacts.

We urge you to immediately pause the lease terminations, especially those that will inevitably lead to lost private sector jobs and decrease private support for land management agencies.

Sincerely,

American Hiking Society
Atomic Heritage Foundation
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Historic Seattle

Mount Rushmore Society
National Parks Conservation Association
Public Lands Alliance
United States Tour Operators Association