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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

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February 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Secretary Burgum:

I am outraged by the firing of thousands of Department of the Interior employees throughout the bureaus without cause. Your actions are endangering the Department's ability to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor its trust responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated Island Communities.

Now that you have executed these mass terminations, I am requesting that you provide details of the actions taken. Oversight of the executive branch is one of Congress's main responsibilities, and the Department's utter lack of transparency is unacceptable.

The Committee on Appropriations has a longstanding relationship with Departmental career staff who are integral to providing the data used to inform our decisions. These staff have always conducted themselves in a professional way with integrity. Unfortunately, nearly all communication has stopped since President Trump took office. My understanding is that these staff have been directed not to communicate with Congress.

In order to make informed decisions in crafting the final fiscal year 2025 Appropriations bill, it is imperative that the Committee have all relevant information related to Departmental resources. To that end, by February 27th, please provide the following information:

- Breakdown of terminations by bureau, program office, job series, and location.
- Number of probationary positions identified as part of the OPM memo directive that were retained in each of the above categories.

- Number of vacancies in each of the above categories.

It is clear to me that this reckless and indiscriminate purge of public servants will have lasting harmful effects. The chaotic manner in which these mass firings were executed will only make the federal government more inefficient. Ultimately, when the federal government fails to deliver services, it will be the American people who suffer.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations