



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 22 2013

The Honorable Cynthia Lummis
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lummis:

Thank you for your letter of February 14, 2013, regarding Secretarial Order 3321 establishing the National Blueways System, as part of America's Great Outdoors. I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns on this important matter.

The National Blueways System (NBS) was established to recognize large river systems conserved through diverse stakeholder partnerships and to promote cooperation in support of economic development, natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and education in these river systems. The Order expressly states that designation does not authorize or affect the use of private property and it does not affect or interfere with any Federal, state, local, or tribal government jurisdiction or applicable law.

Participation in the National Blueways program is locally-led, voluntary, and non-regulatory. The NBS recognizes and supports diverse stakeholder partnerships that have come together to pursue a common vision for their river system. A National Blueway designation is a prestigious award for a river system and its stakeholders. Private landowners within a watershed recognized as a National Blueway may choose to not participate in any assistance programs or initiatives undertaken by the stakeholder partnership.

State, local, and tribal governments determine their own level of participation. The Department will not designate National Blueways that lack diverse support from government agencies within the watershed. Similarly, local communities and businesses will be valued members of successful stakeholder partnerships and will determine their own roles and extent of engagement.

Your letter asks that upon receipt of a request for designation impacting any watershed in Wyoming, that stakeholders within the watershed be notified. Your letter also asks for ample opportunity for public comment and participation before any decision regarding a NBS designation. One of the key criteria for being recognized as a National Blueway is that a diverse stakeholder partnership representing interests from across the watershed come together to seek the recognition. It will be the work of the stakeholder partnership to pursue broad public awareness of the nomination. Creating ample opportunities for public engagement is key to presenting a strong case for recognition and support as a National Blueway.

Stakeholder partnerships seeking a National Blueway designation will be evaluated based on their efforts to reach out and incorporate the views of a diverse array of individuals and public entities. The support of state, local, and tribal governments will be sought by the stakeholder

partnership as part of the process of nominating a river and its watershed as a National Blueway. Successful nominations will include statements of support from businesses, organizations, Federal and state agencies, and local and tribal governments within the watershed.

The Department is committed to a National Blueway nomination process that will require the recruitment of a state sponsoring agency. If a nominated river and its watershed include land in more than one state, the nomination process will also require a letter of support from states with a significant portion of the watershed within their borders.

Finally, with respect to any possible impact of NBS designation on water rights, the Secretary's Order is explicit that the designation has no such role: "nor shall this initiative or any designation pursuant to this Order affect or interfere with any Federal, state, local, and tribal government jurisdiction or applicable law including interstate compacts relating to water or the laws of any state or tribe relating to the control, appropriation, use or distribution of water or water rights."

I value your comments. Please do not hesitate to share with me any further thoughts you have on Secretarial Order 3321. A similar reply has been sent to the other signatories of your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ken Salazar