

4 October, 2017

Greg Gould, Director
Office of Natural Resources Revenue

Greg, please accept my resignation as Senior Advisor at ONRR, effective Friday October 6, 2017. It has been such a great pleasure working with you and your team despite the circumstances surrounding my reassignment to ONRR.

Joel Clement

Secretary Ryan Zinke
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I hereby resign my position as Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

The career men and women of DOI serve because they believe in DOI's mission to protect our nation's natural and cultural resources and they believe that service to this country is a responsibility and an honor. I'm proud to have served at DOI alongside such devoted public servants, and I share their dedication to the mission and country, so it is with a heavy heart that I am resigning as a senior official at the Department. I have three reasons for my resignation:

Poor Leadership. I blew the whistle on the Trump administration because I believe you unlawfully retaliated against me for disclosing the perilous impacts of climate change upon Alaska Native communities and for working to help get them out of harm's way. The investigations into my whistleblower complaints are ongoing and I hope to prevail.

Retaliating against civil servants for raising health and safety concerns is unlawful, but there are many more items to add to your resume of failure: You and President Trump have waged an all-out assault on the civil service by muzzling scientists and policy experts like myself; you conducted an arbitrary and sloppy review of our treasured National Monuments to score political points; your team has compromised tribal sovereignty by limiting programs meant to serve Indians and Alaska Natives; you are undercutting important work to protect the western sage grouse and its habitat; you eliminated a rule that prevented oil and gas interests from cheating taxpayers on royalty payments; you cancelled the moratorium on a failed coal leasing program that was also shortchanging taxpayers; and you even cancelled a study into the health risks of

people living near mountaintop removal coal mines after rescinding a rule that would have protected their health.

You have disrespected the career staff of the Department by questioning their loyalty and you have played fast and loose with government regulations to score points with your political base at the expense of American health and safety. Secretary Zinke, your agenda profoundly undermines the DOI mission and betrays the American people.

Waste of Taxpayer Dollars. My background is in science, policy, and climate change. You reassigned me to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue. My new colleagues were as surprised as I was by the involuntary reassignment to a job title with no duties in an office that specializes in auditing and dispersing fossil fuel royalty income. They acted in good faith to find a role for me, and I deeply appreciate their efforts. In the end, however, reassigning and training me as an auditor when I have no background in that field will involve an exorbitant amount of time and effort on the part of my colleagues, incur significant taxpayer expense, and create a situation in which these talented specialists are being led by someone without experience in their field. I choose to save them the trouble, save taxpayer dollars, and honor the organization by stepping away to find a role more suited to my skills. Secretary Zinke, you and your fellow high-flying Cabinet officials have demonstrated over and over that you are willing to waste taxpayer dollars, but I'm not.

Climate Change Is Real and It's Dangerous. I have highlighted the Alaska Native communities on the brink in the Arctic, but many other Americans are facing climate impacts head-on. Families in the path of devastating hurricanes, businesses in coastal communities experiencing frequent and severe flooding, fishermen pulling up empty nets due to warming seas, medical professionals working to understand new disease vectors, farming communities hit by floods of biblical proportions, and owners of forestlands laid waste by invasive insects. These are just a few of the impacts Americans face. If the Trump administration continues to try to silence experts in science, health and other fields, many more Americans, and the natural ecosystems upon which they depend, will be put at risk.

The solutions and adaptations to these impacts will be complex, but exponentially less difficult and expensive than waiting until tragedy strikes – as we have seen with Houston, Florida, the US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico – and there is no time to waste. We must act quickly to limit climate change while also preparing for its impacts.

Secretary Zinke: It is well known that you, Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt, and President Trump are shackled to special interests such as oil, gas, and mining. You are unwilling to lead on climate change, and cannot be trusted with our nation's natural resources.

So for those three compelling reasons – poor leadership, waste, and your failures on climate change, I tender my resignation. The best use of my skills is to join with the majority of Americans who understand what's at stake, working to find ways to innovate and thrive despite

the many hurdles ahead. You have not silenced me; I will continue to be an outspoken advocate for action, and my voice will be part of the American chorus calling for your resignation so that someone loyal to the interests of all Americans, not just special interests, can take your job.

My thoughts and wishes are with the career women and men who remain at DOI. I encourage them to persist when possible, resist when necessary, and speak truth to power so the institution may recover and thrive once this assault on its mission is over.

Joel Clement

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