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February 25, 2026

Dear Senator:

RE: Oppose the Nomination of Stevan Pearce to Serve as Director of the Bureau of Land Management

On behalf of Public Citizen and our more than one million members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to reject the nomination of Stevan Pearce to serve as Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Pearce is unfit to lead this agency due to an inadequate ethics plan that leaves many of his core financial interests intact, creating opportunities for conflicts of interest.

Pearce has a decades-long record of advocating for the sale or stripping of protections from America's public lands.¹ In 2012, Pearce pledged to “reverse this trend of public ownership of lands” in western states - a statement that should be disqualifying for someone who seeks to be a steward of the 245 million acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management under its mandate to allow multiple uses of public lands.

Pearce has long displayed a distaste for democratic governance and proper ethics oversight. As chairman of the New Mexico Republican Party, Pearce questioned the validity of the 2020 election results, in which Joe Biden won the statewide popular vote by 11 points.² Pearce helped orchestrate³ the nomination of a slate of five electors who falsely claimed that Trump had won the 2020 election in New Mexico.⁴ Pearce also has sought to defund the Office of Congressional Ethics⁵ and pushed a change to House rules that appeared intended to bog down ethics investigations.⁶

¹ Sam Mauhay-Moore, "Trump's Pick to Manage 245M Acres Notoriously Hellbent on Selling Public Lands," *SFGate*, Nov. 17, 2025, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/trump-steve-pearce-blm-nominee-21185400.php>.

² Morgan Lee, "New Mexico Electors Cast 5 Votes for Joe Biden as GOP Sues to Invalidate," *Associated Press*, Dec. 14, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-coronavirus-pandemic-electoral-college-ac6b6176827911ade4bf0d9b5d2e1bc6>

³ New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez, *Investigation into New Mexico's 2020 Fake Presidential Elector Scheme: Final Report*, New Mexico Department of Justice, Jan. 5, 2024, <https://nm DOJ.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FE-Final-Report.pdf>.

⁴ Susan Montoya Bryan and Morgan Lee, "New Mexico Attorney General Says Fake GOP Electors Can't Be Prosecuted, Recommends Changes," *Associated Press*, Jan. 5, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/new-mexico-fake-electors-9ec6f35313c6bbfe8f1ac65e8d5b323c>.

⁵ Rema Rahman, "Congressman Takes Aim at Ethics Agency," *Roll Call*, June 9, 2016, <https://rollcall.com/2016/06/09/congressman-takes-aim-at-ethics-agency/>.

⁶ Hannah Hess, "Pearce Pushed House Rule Change to Provide 'Protection' in Ethics Cases," *Roll Call*, Jan. 13, 2015, <https://rollcall.com/2015/01/13/pearce-pushed-house-rule-change-to-provide-protection-in-ethics-cases-2/>.

Pearce's business entanglements and apparent distaste for ethical norms raise questions about whether his recusals and ethics agreement are sufficient. Pearce has long derived significant income from New Mexico's oil and gas industry. According to Pearce's public financial disclosure report certified by the Office of Government Ethics in December 2025⁷, Pearce was president of Trinity Industries Inc., an oilfield services company, and held numerous other investments in oil drilling equipment in New Mexico⁸ as well as royalty interests for more than 1,100 oil wells in Oklahoma, an interest in farmland in New Mexico, as well as a promissory note of \$1 million to \$5 million from Lea County Bancshares, a bank that lends to the oil and gas industry.⁹

Pearce and his wife have agreed to sell off oil and gas royalty interests and stock and bond investments. But under Pearce's ethics agreement, the oilfield service firm Trinity Industries would remain under the control of his wife, Cynthia Pearce, and could be free to rent oilfield equipment to companies drilling on the very federal land that Pearce is poised to oversee in his role at BLM. This same issue surfaced during Pearce's unsuccessful 2018 campaign for governor of New Mexico, when his campaign declined to identify which energy firms rented equipment from Pearce's company.¹⁰ Under the current agreement, Cynthia Pearce would be charged with running Trinity Industries. But her husband has expressed a dim view of spousal independence, writing in a 2014 memoir that "The wife is to voluntarily submit, just as the husband is to lovingly lead and sacrifice."¹¹

Over his political career, Steve Pearce has made it clear that his allegiance is to the fossil fuel industry, rather than to the public interest. Pearce has pushed to eliminate BLM methane restrictions for oil and gas drillers¹², claiming that they are too costly for oil and gas companies, introduced amendments to block implementation of BLM methane standards, and sought to block the federal government from increasing oil and gas royalty rates that had not been revised since the 1920s.¹³ He has downplayed climate change and embraced the extremist "constitutional sheriff" movement, a fringe ideology that argues that county officials have the power to dictate what can be done on federal lands within their borders.¹⁴ Pearce even introduced legislation to prevent the creation of national monuments in New Mexico.

⁷ Stevan Pearce, Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e), Nominee Report, U.S. Office of Government Ethics, certified December 23, 2025,

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nCa0tKVEtLcd7EE21RebSUX8QDRATKX-/view>

⁸ Chris D'Angelo, "Docs Detail Trump BLM Nominee's Vast Wealth, Financial Entanglements," *Public Domain*, Jan. 15, 2026, <https://www.publicdomain.media/p/trump-blm-steve-pearce-financial-disclosure-ethics>

⁹ Kerry Curry, "New Mexico Fuels U.S. Crude Oil Output, Quietly Becoming Energy Powerhouse," *Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas Blog*, Apr. 2, 2025,

<https://www.fhfb.com/blog/post/4169/new-mexico-fuels-u-s-crude-oil-output-quietly-beco>.

¹⁰ Morgan Lee, "AP Investigation: Pearce Companies Rent Oilfield Equipment," *Associated Press*, Oct. 10, 2018, <https://apnews.com/gubernatorial-elections-general-news-987259ee16bd47f5ac26f01b85e55be1>.

¹¹ Aaron Blake, "GOP Congressman's Book: 'The Wife Is to Voluntarily Submit' to Her Husband," *Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 2014,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/01/22/gop-congressmans-book-the-wife-is-to-voluntarily-submit-to-her-husband/>.

¹² Rep. Stevan Pearce, Floor Remarks on BLM Methane Rule Funding, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 7, 2017, C-SPAN,

<https://www.c-span.org/clip/us-house-of-representatives/user-clip-rep-steve-pearce-argues-to-defund-blm-methane-rule/4734144>.

¹³ Spencer Brignac, "How the House Almost Cheated Taxpayers Out of Billions: An Amendment to Prevent Increasing Onshore Oil Royalties Nearly Cost Taxpayers \$1.25 Billion Over the Next 10 Years," *Project on Government Oversight (POGO)*, July 10, 2015,

<https://www.pogo.org/analyses/how-house-almost-cheated-taxpayers-out-of-billions>.

¹⁴ Lilly Bock-Brownstein, "Seven Times 'Sell-Off Steve' Tried to Dispose of America's Public Lands," *Center for Western Priorities*, Nov. 24, 2025,

<https://westernpriorities.org/2025/11/seven-times-sell-off-steve-tried-to-dispose-of-americas-public-lands/>

Public Citizen urges Senate lawmakers to vote against the confirmation of Stevan Pearce as Director of the Bureau of Land Management. America's public lands must not be for sale, and the Senate should not confirm a conflicted nominee who has spent his career arguing otherwise.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Weissman

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cc: Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee