

June 4, 2026

## Return of the Corporate Swamp Monster

*Former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, Author of 'You Report To Me,' Exerts Powerful Influence Over Department He Once Led, Raking In \$8.8M In Lobbying Revenue From 53 Clients, 33 Meetings at the Interior Department in 2025*

By Alan Zibel, Public Citizen and Jesse Coleman, Fieldnotes

During Donald Trump's first term in office, former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt served as a deeply conflicted advocate for the powerful. A longtime lobbyist, Bernhardt [advanced corporate interests](#), including those of oil and gas companies, mining companies, and big agriculture. Bernhardt became infamous for [keeping a card](#) to remember his numerous [conflicts of interest](#) that mandated recusals.

After Trump's election in 2024, Bernhardt [led](#) the Trump transition team's Interior Department planning. Once Trump was sworn in, Bernhardt returned to the private sector. He has remained an extremely powerful force, particularly within the Interior Department, via his new lobbying firm, the Bernhardt Group, a for-hire shadow version of the Interior Department itself.



That influence is especially significant given that Interior Secretary Doug Burgum's plate is chock-full of things that don't have much to do with the agency he leads. Burgum has been [focused on defending Trump's overseas wars](#), [Trump's vanity projects](#), and [Trump's partisan takeover](#) of the 250th anniversary celebrations. Burgum, who was considered for the job of [Secretary of State](#), has a [reputation](#) for being imperious and detached from his job.

Since its launch just [one year ago](#), Bernhardt's firm has recorded \$8.8 million in revenue from 53 clients in just three completed quarters of lobbying — a classic example of how Washington, D.C. 's revolving door blurs the lines between corporate interests and government. Bernhardt Group reported [nearly \\$2.9 million](#) in the first quarter of 2026, putting the lobbying firm on pace for \$11 million in revenue this year. The "revolving door" is a system in which corporations and other wealthy interests develop close relationships with government officials through the movement of key individuals back and forth between the private and public sectors.

While Burgum tends to more glamorous matters, his predecessor, David Bernhardt, and his new lobbying firm colleagues are filling in the details and doing the day-to-day business of providing access and favors for corporate America. That is a goal that both Burgum and Bernhardt share. But it appears to be Bernhardt and his lobbying firm doing the actual work.

Bernhardt and his staff, many of whom were part of his leadership team during the first Trump administration, have landed more than 50 clients. They are largely focused on the natural resources issues overseen by the Interior Department. Many of these lobbying clients moved from Bernhardt's previous firm, the lobbying giant Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck.

### Key Findings

According to our analysis of OpenSecrets lobbying data through April 30, those lobbying fees overwhelmingly come from corporate interests, including:

- 34% (\$3 million) from the mining industry
- 23% (\$2 million) from the oil and gas industry
- 12% (\$1 million) from government agencies that provide water for big Western agriculture users
- 10% (\$910,000) from agriculture and forestry companies
- 5% (\$430,000) from renewables or mixed fossil fuel/renewables businesses.

Taken together, at least 85% of Bernhardt Group's revenue to date comes from clients whose businesses are heavily tied to the Interior Department.

In addition, we analyzed Interior Department [visitor logs](#) for 2025 and found 33 visits by Bernhardt Group staffers. Those include:

- 15 meetings with Interior Department officials, Bernhardt Group lobbyists and/or clients, law/lobbying firms
- 16 meetings with Bernhardt Group lobbyists and alone or unidentifiable visitors
- Two visits by David Bernhardt himself (below)

VISITOR / PUBLIC AREAS SIGN-IN SHEET							
Post # 5		Date: 5/5/25					
NAME (PRINT)		Visitor Signature	DOI Contact's Name (Meeting)	DOI Phone #	Time In	Purpose (Circle one)	Escort Required
Last	First, M.I.						
Bernhardt	David, Longly		Library	3796	0937	Library, Museum, **ICS Cafeteria, *DOIFCU,	YES NO
(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Museum	4743	1000	Library, Museum, **ICS Cafeteria, *DOIFCU,	YES NO
Kamaka			snack	(b) (6)	1007	Library, Museum, **ICS	YES

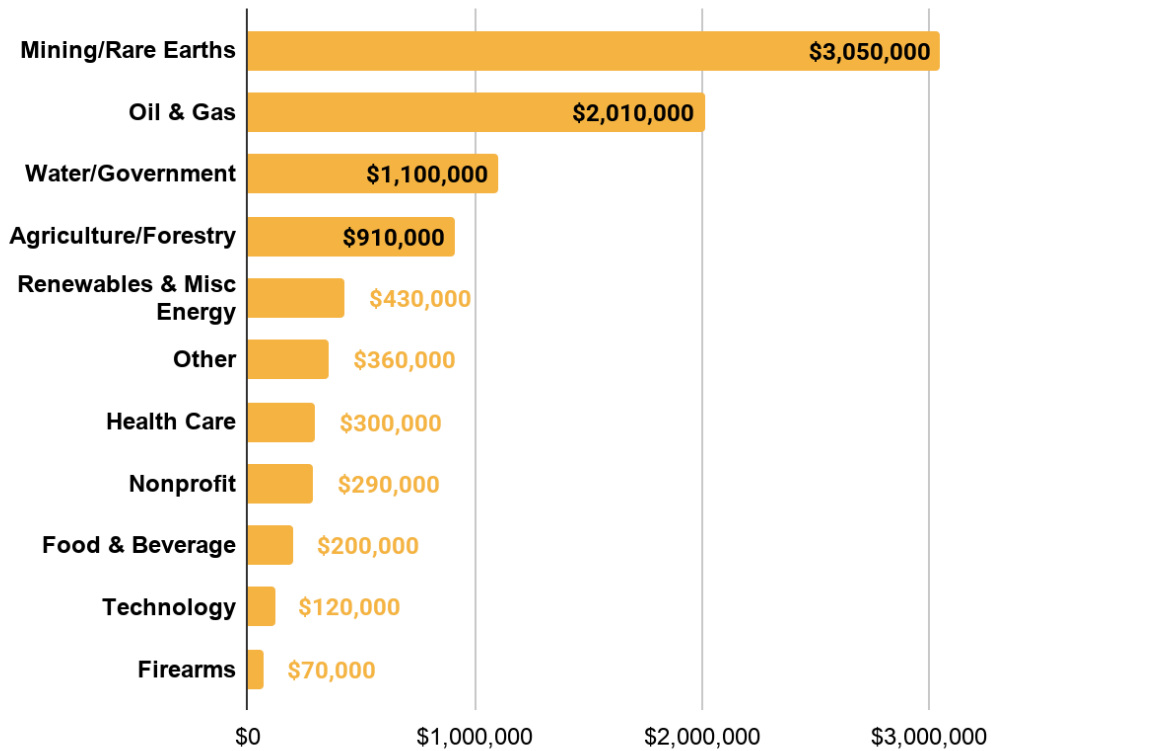
A May 5, 2025 [visit](#) by former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to the Interior Department library



VISITOR / PUBLIC AREAS SIGN-IN SHEET						
Post # 4						Date: 10/22/25
NAME (PRINT)	Visitor Signature	DOI Contact's Name (Meeting)	DOI Phone #	Time In	Purpose (Circle one)	Escort Required
Last						
First, M.I.						
Bernhardt David		Rm 3038 Ault, Douglas	(b) (6)	0950	Library, Museum, **ICS Cafeteria, *DOIFCU,	YES
		3358 Stephanie			Library, Museum, **ICS	YES

An October 22, 2025 [visit](#) by former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to Douglas Ault, chief of law enforcement at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Figure 1: Bernhardt Group Lobbying, By Sector (2025-2026 ytd)**



Source: Analysis of OpenSecrets data for [2025](#) and [2026](#).

**Table 1: Selected Bernhardt Group Meetings with Interior Department Officials**

Date	Companies	Visitors
2025-03-19	<a href="#">Fennemore Craig P.C.</a>	William McGrath, Bernhardt Group; Robert D. Comer, Fennemore Craig P.C.
2025-04-17	<a href="#">Flogistix</a>	Todd Willens, Bernhardt Group; Kristin Ann Hincke, Flogistix
2025-04-18	<a href="#">Cadiz Inc</a>	Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Susan Kennedy, Cadiz Inc.



Date	Companies	Visitors
2025-04-30	<a href="#">American Loggers Council</a>	Jon Hrobsky, Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Bradley Scott Dane; American Loggers Council, Executive Director
2025-07-09	<a href="#">Cadiz Inc.</a>	Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Susan Kennedy, Cadiz Inc.
2025-07-14	<a href="#">J.R. Simplot</a>	William McGrath, Bernhardt Group; Cameron Michael Bishop, J.R. Simplot Co, Head of Washington Office
2025-07-16	<a href="#">Talos Energy</a>	Katherine Gonzales, Bernhardt Group, VP; Lynne Hackedorn, Talos Energy, Director of Government Affairs
2025-07-17	<a href="#">American Copper</a>	Jon Hrobsky, Bernhardt Group; Bonnie Broman, American Copper, VP of Exploration; Rick Van Nieuwenhuysse, American Copper, Chairman
2025-09-15	<a href="#">American Tungsten and Antimony</a>	Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Andre Booyzen, American Tungsten and Antimony Ltd, Managing Director
2025-09-16	<a href="#">Twin Metals Minnesota</a>	William McGrath, Bernhardt Group; Arshia Javaherian, Dean Debeltz, Twin Metals Minnesota
2025-09-18	<a href="#">J.R Simplot</a>	Jon Hrobsky, Bernhardt Group; J.R Simplot executives Alan Prouty, James Alderman, Thomas Perry, Cameron Bishop
2025-09-30	<a href="#">ConocoPhillips.</a>	Luke Johnson, Jon Hrobsky, Bernhardt Group; Kjersten Drager, ,Thomas Jantunen, ConocoPhillips
2025-11-17	<a href="#">Cadiz Inc.</a>	Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Susan Kennedy, Cadiz Inc.
2025-11-19	<a href="#">American Exploration &amp; Production Council</a>	Luke Johnson, Bernhardt Group; Wendy Kirchoff , AXPC,
2025-11-20	<a href="#">Twin Metals</a>	William McGrath, Bernhardt Group; Arshia Javaherian, Twin Metals Minnesota, VP of Legal Affairs

Source : Analysis of Interior Department visitor logs. The table includes meetings where a corporate or lobbying firm could be identified in addition to Bernhardt Group.

## Corporate Clients Benefit

Many of Bernhardt's corporate clients (see full list in **Table 2** and **Appendix**) have already fared well under the Trump administration. The Interior Department has already taken steps to benefit those companies, and the Republican-controlled Congress has done so as well. Some key examples:

### Antofagasta PLC

The Chilean mining company seeking to construct an underground copper and nickel mine upstream from the Boundary Waters wilderness area in Minnesota has scored major victories under the second Trump administration. In July 2025, Deputy Interior Secretary Kate MacGregor, who served as Bernhardt's deputy secretary, [reinstated a legal opinion](#) from the first Trump administration that allows Antofagasta to renew mining leases for its proposed Twin Metals mine in northern Minnesota. And in spring 2026, the Republican-controlled



Congress [voted](#) to overturn a 20-year ban on mining on federal land adjacent to the protected area. Twin Metals recently [hired](#) former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-MN) to [lobby](#) for the project.




WASHINGTON

JULY 17 2025

## Memorandum

To: Acting Solicitor

From: Deputy Secretary 

Subject: Reinstatement of Solicitor Opinion M-37049, "Reversal of M-37036, 'Twin Metals Minnesota Application to Renew Preference Right Leases (MNES-01352 and MNES-01353)'" and Withdrawal of Solicitor Opinion M-37072

On January 25, 2022, Principal Deputy Solicitor Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes issued a legal opinion, M-37072 (Bledsoe Downes M-Opinion), which concluded that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had improperly renewed Twin Metals Minnesota's mineral leases in violation of certain ~~statutory and regulatory authorities, and that those leases were therefore subject to cancellation~~

Interior memo [reinstating](#) Twin Metals mineral leases

**Resolution Copper (Rio Tinto/BHP)**

The world's two largest mining companies, Rio Tinto and BHP Group, stand to reap billions from a copper mine in Arizona that is [proceeding](#) due to Trump administration actions. The Trump administration in March 2026 [completed](#) a [land transfer](#) between the U.S. Forest Service and Resolution Copper, a joint mining venture of the two companies in rural Arizona. The British-Australian Rio Tinto Group owns 55% stake in the venture and Australia's BHP Group owns 45%. The U.S. Forest Service has agreed to trade Resolution Copper property in exchange for other environmentally sensitive properties, a project that required Interior Department [review](#).

The Resolution Copper mine is [located](#) on a six-square-mile stretch of land in rural Arizona about 60 miles east of Phoenix called Oak Flat, or Chi'chil Bildagoteel, where native tribes [have held ceremonies](#) for centuries. The underground mine is expected to ultimately collapse and create a two-mile-wide, 1,000-foot-deep crater, [destroying the San Carlos Apache Tribe's ceremonial site](#).

The Trump administration has aggressively backed Resolution Copper, with Trump and Burgum [meeting with Rio Tinto and BHP executives](#) in the White House. Burgum has [called](#) the project "vital to America's long-term security, energy infrastructure and global competitiveness."



### **Cadiz Inc.**

Bernhardt Group represents Fenner Gap Mutual Water Co., a nonprofit created by a for-profit company, Cadiz Inc. to distribute water from a massive underground water project. The Los Angeles-based private water company is working to revive a [highly controversial](#) stalled plan to tap an underground aquifer in the Mojave Desert. Cadiz is a [longstanding Bernhardt client](#) from his days at Brownstein Hyatt, which had a financial stake in the project. Scott Slater, a former colleague of Bernhardt's at Brownstein Hyatt [was president and CEO of Cadiz](#) from 2013 to 2023.

The Cadiz project found a receptive audience in the Trump administration as it [decided to pivot](#) from its longstanding plan to send water to Southern California, and instead use the underground water to alleviate the Colorado River crisis. In May 2026, the Interior Department reached an [agreement](#) in which Cadiz will fund technical work to support a potential [federal investment](#) in the project, which has been [rebranded](#) as the "Mojave Groundwater Bank." The project, which [would severely harm](#) the ecosystem of Mojave Desert public lands, has struggled in recent years after a judge [ruled](#) the first Trump administration improperly approved a permit for the project.

### **Kinterra Capital**

In April 2026, two federal agencies [issued a notice formally reversing](#) a Biden-era effort to prohibit mining in the Upper Pecos watershed of New Mexico, in a move that could pave the way for a controversial mining project owned by Canadian private equity firm Kinterra Capital. A year earlier, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management [announced plans to](#) allow mining there, reversing a prior recommendation to ban extraction. From 1927 to 1939, the [Tererro Mine](#) was an active lead, zinc, copper, silver, and gold mine, leaving piles of mining waste. In 1991, heavy rainfall caused runoff from the Tererro site that [killed](#) more than 90,000 trout.

Toronto-based Kinterra Capital [acquired](#) Australia-based New World Resources in the fall of 2025 for \$160 million, purchasing mining projects in Arizona, Michigan, and Nevada, giving the company 175,000 tons of annual copper production capacity.

### **Burgum Travels the World; 'Shadow Secretary' Bernhardt Exerts Influence**

The influence of corporate interests at the Interior Department has been a longstanding problem, especially during Republican administrations. Burgum's tenure is yet another extreme example of this tendency, reminiscent of [James Watt](#), the Reagan-era Interior Secretary infamous for close ties to extractive industries and picking [fights with environmentalists](#).

The Interior Department administers our national parks and public lands, including the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees 245 million acres, and the 85 million acres of the National Park System. Despite a reputation as a moderate Republican governor, Burgum's

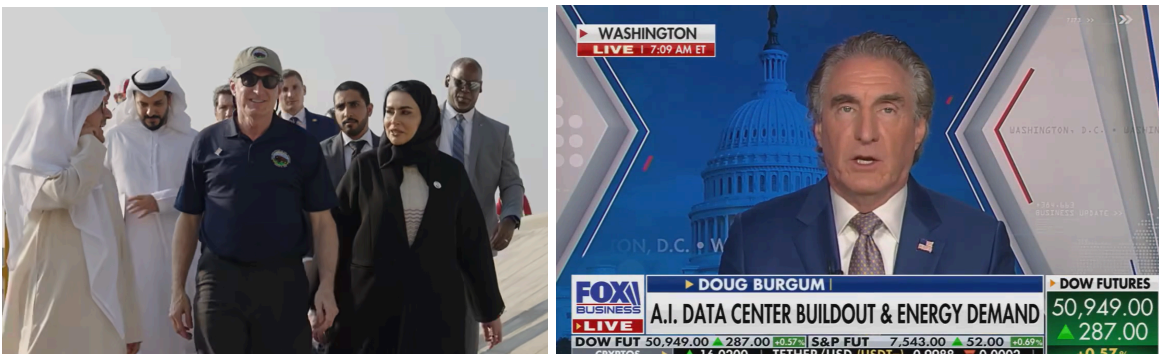


tenure has been filled with [attacks on public lands advocates](#), [Fox News appearances](#), [obsequiousness to Trump](#), frequent international travel, and lots of television appearances.

A former [software executive](#) and [real estate](#) and [fossil fuel investor](#) turned politician, Burgum refers to America's public lands and waters as "America's balance sheet," [claiming](#) at his confirmation hearing that western states "are being choked because they have so much public land and there's so much overreach by the federal government." In the course of his efforts to promote Trump's floundering "American Energy Dominance" [agenda](#), Burgum has openly denigrated conservation advocacy. "All the people that are trying to stop activity on federal lands, you don't understand the financial impact of it," Burgum [said at a BlackRock investor event](#). "All of you are financially literate. Wouldn't it be great if we could have the world be a little more financially literate?"

In under 18 months in office, Burgum has visited [Abu Dhabi](#), [Greece](#), [Japan](#), and [Venezuela](#), where he [brought back \\$100 million in gold](#). In addition to sitting atop the Interior Department, Burgum, a former software executive and presidential candidate, also leads the Trump-created National Energy Dominance Council. That perch has allowed Burgum to transform a relatively low-profile cabinet position into something more befitting the personality of a former CEO and [member](#) of an [ultra-exclusive](#), celebrity-filled private skiing club in Montana, who has an affinity for [helicopter trips and freshly baked cookies](#).

Despite his business-oriented rhetoric, Burgum has used bogus "national security" arguments to justify the Trump administration's [campaign against renewable energy](#). Burgum [claimed](#) that Chinese-made solar panels are "an issue for national security" and that offshore wind farm projects present a national security risk, an argument that federal judges and national security experts [reject](#). Burgum and several other top Trump administration officials then invoked a bogus national security argument to [exempt](#) Gulf of Mexico drilling from endangered species protections, an extreme abuse of authority that risks driving a [whale species](#) with a population of less than 100 into extinction.



Interior Secretary Doug Burgum on a trip to [Abu Dhabi](#) last year (left). Burgum talking on Fox News (right) about AI data centers while also [criticizing](#) Pope Leo.



## Who's In the Swamp With David Bernhardt?

With Burgum busy defending Trump's wars and assorted [vanity projects](#) in Washington, D.C., Bernhardt has maintained his influence. His firm is stocked with former Interior Department officials cashing in on their prior government employment by lobbying for corporate interests — a for-hire shadow version of the Interior Department itself.

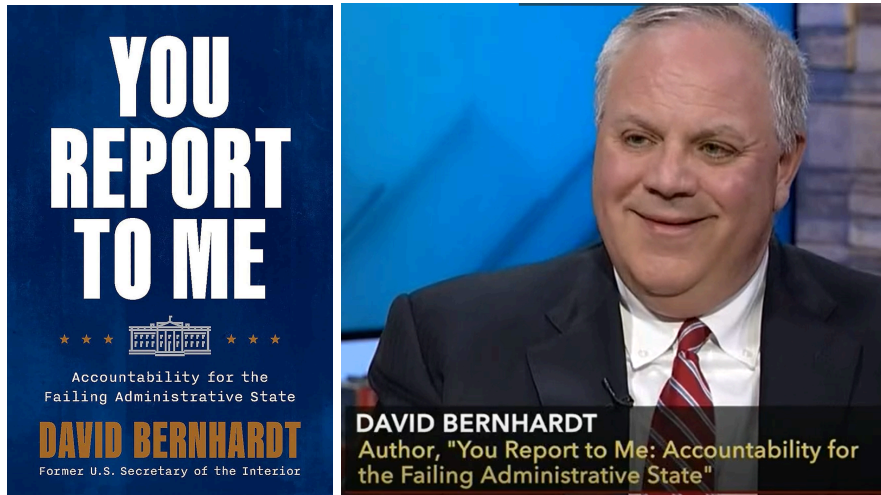
Bernhardt is a Colorado native, a longtime oil and gas attorney and lobbyist who started his career [as a Republican congressional aide](#) and then worked as a corporate lawyer. He worked in several roles at the Interior Department under President George W. Bush, ending as the Department's solicitor. At the time of his nomination to be Interior Secretary in 2019, Bernhardt's former firm, Brownstein Hyatt had been paid \$2.1 million by the oil and gas industry, \$1.2 million by the mining industry, and \$1.5 million by other energy companies, [according to an OpenSecrets tally](#) at the time.

Under the first Trump administration, Bernhardt cultivated a reputation as a low-key aide focused on getting stuff done. For example, during the tumultuous term of Trump's first Interior Secretary, Ryan Zinke, Bernhardt said, "I'm his understudy...I do whatever he doesn't want to do. Every secretary wants one of those, the guy who does the other stuff." Bernhardt faced [numerous](#) ethics [allegations](#) and [complaints](#) over multiple alleged conflicts of interest. In perhaps the most egregious example, under Bernhardt's oversight, the Interior Department [made decisions](#) that directly benefited one of his former lobbying clients - the California-based Wetlands Water District.

Ultimately, the Interior Department's inspector general found that Bernhardt [did not violate ethics rules](#), based on a narrow interpretation of the law. The inspector general [determined](#) that because Bernhardt's former client is a California state agency, it did not count as a "former client" and also determined that Bernhardt had worked on broad policy issues rather than specific "particular matters" that would necessitate recusal under Trump's first-term ethics pledge. "He's a smart lawyer," Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif) [told the New York Times](#). "He knows how to engage where he has a patina of legal cover and how to keep himself out of trouble. It doesn't mean that there's not a foul smell to his involvement in these issues that so directly benefited his former client." Now that Bernhardt is out of office, his firm [represents](#) the Westlands Water District once again.

After leaving the first Trump administration, Bernhardt [joined](#) the America First Policy Institute, a MAGA think tank, and wrote a book entitled ["You Report to Me"](#) in which he detailed standard conservative and corporate complaints about supposed excesses of "the failing administrative state." In an interview with C-SPAN, Bernhardt [detailed](#) his personal relationship with Trump. "I called him, discussed issues with him ... It turned into a working relationship that was very, very efficient and much different than the experiences I had experienced in the Bush administration." In February 2025, Bernhardt became a [board member](#) of Trump Media and Technology Group, which runs Truth Social, Trump's social media site.





Bernhardt [promoting](#) his book on C-SPAN in 2023

For Bernhardt and his colleagues, knowledge of the policies and the people who make decisions is a key selling point. “We know how this administration moves — because we helped move it before,” Bernhardt said in a [statement](#) launching his firm in June 2025. “I believe our experience at that level of government gives us unmatched insight into how to maximize opportunities for our clients.”

**“We know how this administration moves — because we helped move it before,”**

— David Bernhardt, The Bernhardt Group

One of the most crucial connections for Bernhardt Group lobbyists is the Interior Department’s Deputy Secretary [Kate MacGregor](#), who served in the same role in the first Trump administration. During the first Trump administration, MacGregor became known as a conduit for [fossil fuel](#) and [mining](#) interests, the key Interior Department contact for energy companies looking for help with regulations and permits—with one fossil fuel trade group executive [noting that](#) “we’ll call Kate” was the solution to virtually every problem. Politico recently reported that MacGregor [would be a seasoned hand to](#) take on the role of Interior Secretary should the ambitious Burgum leave the job.

For Bernhardt Group clients, these sorts of connections are a key selling point. In an unusual [statement](#) announcing Bernhardt Group’s hiring, Andre Booyzen, managing director of American Tungsten & Antimony, an Australian company seeking to mine in Utah, said he is working for U.S. government support to ensure his company “has a first mover advantage in terms of the U.S. antimony market.” Hiring the Bernhardt Group “will open new doors for us much faster, as we are able to lean on the knowledge and expertise the Group provides,



particularly when liaising at a U.S. Government level,” Booyzen said. Below is a look at this team of corporate [lobbyists](#), largely made up of Bernhardt’s former top leadership team at the Interior Department:

- **Jon Hrobsky**, [Partner](#). Served as a Senior Adviser in the Immediate Office of the Secretary of the Interior during Bush’s administration, where he oversaw offshore energy policy. Subsequently served as a top official at the Minerals Management Service, an agency within the Interior Department, where he helped enable the largest oil and gas lease sale in American history, according to his LinkedIn [profile](#). Also worked as director of policy and government affairs for the National Ocean Industries Association, which advocates for offshore energy exploration.
- **Cole Rojewski**, [Partner](#). Served as Bernhardt’s legislative affairs director, according to his LinkedIn [profile](#), managing confirmation efforts for senior officials overseeing congressional relations. Rojewski defended Bernhardt against allegations of improper conduct, issuing a statement [saying](#) that Bernhardt “is one of the most law-abiding, ethically-sound people I know, and ... has always followed the letter of the law.” Rojewski also worked as [an aide](#) to several Republican members of Congress.
- **Luke Johnson**, [Partner](#). A longtime Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck [lobbyist](#) who worked as a top official at the Bureau of Land Management under the George W. Bush administration and [worked](#) at the National Ocean Industries Association and as a Capitol Hill aide.
- **Todd Willens**, [Partner](#). Willens previously was a [lobbyist](#) with RBW Group LLC. At the Interior Department, Willens served as an associate deputy secretary and [chief of staff](#). Years before his time at Interior, he was chief of staff [for former Rep. Steve Pearce](#), who now heads the Bureau of Land Management under Burgum.
- **William McGrath**, [Partner](#). Another longtime Brownstein Hyatt [lobbyist](#) who worked as GOP Staff Director of the Interior, Energy, and Environment Subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
- **Kate Gonzales**, [Vice President](#). A former Brownstein Hyatt [lobbyist](#) who [worked](#) as an aide to former Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, the corporate-friendly centrist from Arizona who started her congressional career as a Democrat and later left the party to become an Independent.
- **Faith Vander Voort**, [Vice President, Public Affairs](#). At the Interior Department, she [worked](#) in communications roles for Bernhardt and later as the agency’s Deputy Director of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. She also [worked](#) for former Vice President Mike Pence and at the firms TAG Strategies and RBW Group.

## Conclusion

The influence of David Bernhardt's lobbying firm on the Interior Department under Doug Burgum highlights a troubling [dynamic](#) that was present at the start of Trump's first term and has only worsened. Lobbying firms with direct ties to Trump have seen [phenomenal growth](#) in income in recent years. These lobbying vendors have learned how to master the game of



influence peddling. Trump has eliminated Obama-era and Biden-era ethics executive orders that restricted the flow of lobbyists into government and placed cooling-off periods on lobbying activity by former government officials.

Comprehensive ethics reforms are required to combat revolving-door abuses. Potential reforms include:

- No appointment of a lobbyist to a federal agency they lobbied within the last two years should be allowed.
- All political appointees should be required to sign an ethics pledge that they will not take any formal actions that affect their former clients or employers of the past two years.
- Senior appointees will pledge not to engage in any lobbying activity or make lobbying contacts at the federal level for four years after leaving public office.
- Agency appointees will pledge not to lobby their former agencies for at least two years after leaving office.
- All appointees will pledge not to accept gifts of any value from persons other than family and close friends while serving in office.
- All gifts to appointees are subject to disclosure while in office.
- Officials responsible for issuing government contracts will agree not to accept employment with any entity to which they awarded a contract for at least two years after leaving office.

**Table 2: Bernhardt Group Lobbying Clients**

Client	2025-26 Lobbying	Industry
American Tungsten & Antimony / Trigg Minerals	\$400,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Antofagasta plc (Twin Metals)	\$380,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Barrick Mining Corp.	\$370,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Arena Energy	\$340,000	Oil & Gas
Wetstone Holdings	\$330,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Fenner Gap Mutual Water Co (Cadiz Inc.)	\$330,000	Water/Government
Equinor	\$330,000	Oil & Gas / Offshore Wind
Westlands Water District	\$300,000	Water/Government
Talos Energy	\$300,000	Oil & Gas
BHP Group Ltd	\$300,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Sierra Pacific Industries	\$270,000	Agriculture/Forestry



Client	2025-26 Lobbying	Industry
ConocoPhillips	\$270,000	Oil & Gas
American Exploration and Production Council (AXPC)	\$230,000	Oil & Gas
USA Rare Earth	\$220,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Kinterra Capital	\$220,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Delaware North Companies	\$200,000	Food & Beverage
Devon Energy	\$190,000	Oil & Gas
Santos Ltd	\$180,000	Oil & Gas
Marubeni Oil and Gas	\$180,000	Oil & Gas
Hudbay Minerals Inc.	\$180,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Actual Resources Solutions	\$180,000	Health Care
Orbia	\$170,000	Agriculture/Forestry
JR Simplot Co	\$170,000	Agriculture/Forestry
Almond Alliance of California	\$170,000	Agriculture/Forestry
Solcoa Industries	\$160,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Permian Resources	\$150,000	Oil & Gas
Katahdin Impact	\$150,000	Other
Contango Silver & Gold / Contango Ore	\$150,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation	\$140,000	Nonprofit
Fallbrook Public Utility District	\$140,000	Water/Government
Everactive Inc	\$120,000	Technology
City & County of Denver	\$120,000	Water/Government
5E Advanced Materials	\$120,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Solidus Resources	\$100,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Ridgecrest Regional Hospital	\$100,000	Health Care
Flowco Inc	\$100,000	Oil & Gas
Arevon Energy	\$100,000	Renewables
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District	\$90,000	Water/Government
Bakelite Synthetics	\$90,000	Agriculture/Forestry



Client	2025-26 Lobbying	Industry
Lpc Conservation	\$80,000	Other
Strata Production Co	\$70,000	Oil & Gas
Silencer Central	\$70,000	Firearms
Project Hollywood Beach	\$70,000	Nonprofit
Chenega Corp	\$70,000	Other
Valhalla Metals	\$60,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Usibelli Coal Mine	\$60,000	Mining/Rare Earths
Medify Air	\$60,000	Other
Madera County CA	\$60,000	Water/Government
Central Arizona Water Conservation District	\$60,000	Water/Government
Naperville Heritage Society	\$50,000	Nonprofit
JM Huber Corp	\$40,000	Agriculture/Forestry
Runway Green	\$30,000	Nonprofit
Cure Coalition	\$20,000	Health Care
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$8,840,000</b>

Source: Analysis of OpenSecrets data for [2025](#) and [2026](#).

## Appendix: Profiles of Key Bernhardt Group Clients

<b>American Tungsten &amp; Antimony / Trigg Minerals</b> · Mining/Rare Earths · \$400,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Subiaco, Western Australia
<b>Background</b>	An Australian mining company now <a href="#">focused</a> on tungsten and antimony projects <a href="#">in Utah</a> and <a href="#">Nevada</a> . Bernhardt <a href="#">serves</a> on the company's advisory board; it was <a href="#">formerly</a> known as Trigg Minerals.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, the White House, Agriculture, Interior, and Defense on behalf of American Tungsten & Antimony on " <a href="#">issues related to mining.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	Received Utah state <a href="#">tax breaks</a> after presenting <a href="#">plans</a> to the Utah legislature. <a href="#">Executive Chairman appears to have met with Donald Trump Jr.</a>

<b>Antofagasta Plc (Twin Metals)</b> · Mining/Rare Earths · \$380,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	London, UK / Chile



<b>Background</b>	Twin Metals LLC is owned by the Chilean mining giant Antofagasta PLC, which has long sought to build an underground copper and nickel mine upstream from the Boundary Waters — the most-visited designated wilderness area in the United States.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, the White House, Interior, and Agriculture on behalf of Antofagasta on " <a href="#">mining leasing issues.</a> " Twin Metals separately <a href="#">hired</a> former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-MN) to <a href="#">lobby</a> for the project.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Interior <a href="#">reinstated</a> the legal framework for the mining leases. Congress <a href="#">overturned</a> a 20-year ban on mining on federal land adjacent to the protected area.

<b>Barrick Mining Corp.</b> · Mining/Rare Earths · \$370,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Canada
<b>Background</b>	Global gold and copper producer with a 61.5% stake in the <a href="#">Nevada Gold Mines</a> joint venture with Newmont Corp. Extensive operations on BLM lands. Planning a public <a href="#">offering</a> of a minority stake in North American assets.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress on behalf of Barrick on " <a href="#">issues related to general mining law.</a> " A senior Barrick advisor <a href="#">testified</a> before the Senate in 2025 in support of the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Direct beneficiary of a Trump executive order prioritizing mineral production on federal lands and broader deregulatory moves.

<b>Arena Energy</b> · Oil & Gas · \$340,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	The Woodlands, TX
<b>Background</b>	Oil and gas exploration company with interests in the Gulf of Mexico. Arena Energy <a href="#">hosted Secretary Burgum</a> and Fox & Friends anchors aboard an offshore oil rig in May 2025.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, the White House, and Interior on behalf of Arena Energy on " <a href="#">issues related to offshore oil and gas development and infrastructure.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	Expanded offshore oil and gas leasing under Trump and lighter oversight of offshore drilling under Interior's <a href="#">plan to consolidate</a> two federal offshore drilling regulators. o. Arena Energy <a href="#">hosted Burgum</a> and Fox & Friends TV anchors at an event on an offshore oil rig in May 2025.

<b>Wetstone Holdings</b> · Mining/Rare Earths · \$330,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	New York / London
<b>Background</b>	Deep-sea mining company formerly known as the Seafloor Minerals Fund, co-founded by a former Shell executive. <a href="#">Startup deep-sea mining companies</a> are trying to get ahead of a regulatory framework for the industry while it is being written. Trump has said he wants <a href="#">to encourage the industry</a> , which <a href="#">threatens</a> vulnerable ocean ecosystems.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied the White House, Commerce, and Interior on behalf of Wetstone on " <a href="#">issues related to deep sea mining.</a> "



<b>Outcomes</b>	BOEM <a href="#">aims</a> to accelerate deep-sea <a href="#">mining</a> in publicly owned waters by speeding up permitting and reducing environmental review timelines.
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<b>Fenner Gap Mutual Water Co (Cadiz Inc.)</b> · Water/Government · \$330,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Los Angeles, CA
<b>Background</b>	A nonprofit created by for-profit Cadiz Inc. to distribute water from the Cadiz underground water project in California. Cadiz has <a href="#">rebranded</a> the project as the "Mojave Groundwater Bank," pitching it as a solution to the Colorado River water crisis. A key permit was <a href="#">invalidated in 2022</a> after a judge ruled the first Trump administration improperly approved it.
<b>Lobbying</b>	The second Trump administration <a href="#">has sought to boost the project</a> through the Bureau of Reclamation.
<b>Outcomes</b>	The Interior Department reached an <a href="#">agreement</a> in which Cadiz will fund technical work "to support potential federal investment in the project."

<b>Equinor</b> · Oil & Gas / Offshore Wind · \$330,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Norway (majority state-owned)
<b>Background</b>	A Norwegian oil, gas, and wind power company, majority <a href="#">owned</a> by the Norwegian government, with major U.S. operations. After Burgum <a href="#">ordered a halt</a> to all construction on Equinor's 54-turbine Empire Wind project off Long Island in April 2025, Equinor <a href="#">retained</a> the Bernhardt Group. Interior again <a href="#">halted</a> the project in December 2025 over unspecified "national security concerns."
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Equinor on " <a href="#">issues related to upstream oil and gas operations and offshore energy.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	A federal judge <a href="#">ruled against the Interior Department</a> in January 2026, allowing Equinor to restart construction on Empire Wind.

<b>Westlands Water District</b> · Water/Government · \$300,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	California
<b>Background</b>	California agency that provides water to large agribusiness operations. Trump has consistently <a href="#">sided</a> with agricultural water users and has <a href="#">derided</a> endangered species protections.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Westlands on " <a href="#">drought legislation and water storage issues.</a> " Interior's Bureau of Reclamation controls the flow of water to Westlands, which supplies corporate growers of almonds, pistachios, and other crops.
<b>Outcomes</b>	The Trump administration boosted the amount of water sent to Central Valley farms <a href="#">in May 2026</a> but the general manager of Westlands <a href="#">called the increase</a> "inadequate."

<b>Talos Energy</b> · Oil & Gas · \$300,000	
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<b>Headquarters</b>	Houston, TX
<b>Background</b>	An independent, fast-growing offshore oil and gas company with interests in the Gulf of Mexico.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Talos on <a href="#">"issues related to offshore oil and gas and the outer continental shelf."</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Interior <a href="#">plans to consolidate</a> the two federal offshore drilling regulators, which environmental watchdogs warn would mean significantly less oversight of offshore drilling.

### BHP Group Ltd · Mining/Rare Earths · \$300,000

<b>Headquarters</b>	UK / Australia
<b>Background</b>	The world's largest mining company, BHP owns a 45% stake in the Resolution Copper mine in Arizona — located on six square miles of federal land near Oak Flat (Chi'chil Bildagoteel), where Native tribes <a href="#">have held ceremonies</a> for centuries. Rio Tinto Group owns the remaining 55%.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied the White House and Congress on behalf of BHP on <a href="#">"international supply chain issues, critical minerals, and legacy assets."</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	In March 2026, the Trump administration <a href="#">shepherded</a> a land transfer between the U.S. Forest Service and Resolution Copper..

### Sierra Pacific Industries · Agriculture/Forestry · \$270,000

<b>Headquarters</b>	Anderson, CA
<b>Background</b>	Privately held timber company, Second-largest U.S. lumber producer.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, Agriculture, and Interior on behalf of Sierra Pacific on <a href="#">"wildfire policy and funding issues."</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Republicans' 2025 budget legislation required BLM to <a href="#">increase</a> timber available for harvest by 20 million board-feet per year through 2034. BLM's Oregon office <a href="#">sold ~30% more timber in 2025 than in 2024</a> . In February 2026, BLM <a href="#">announced plans</a> to quadruple logging in California and Oregon forests to levels not seen since the 1990s.

### ConocoPhillips · Oil & Gas · \$270,000

<b>Headquarters</b>	Houston, TX
<b>Background</b>	Major American multinational oil and gas producer. Continued development of investments on Alaska's North Slope is <a href="#">one of the company's top priorities</a> .
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of ConocoPhillips on <a href="#">"onshore oil and gas development."</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	In fall 2025, Interior reopened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain to oil and gas development and quickly <a href="#">approved a large ConocoPhillips exploratory project</a> after only one week of public comment. BLM also <a href="#">reopened</a> the National Petroleum Reserve to development, with ConocoPhillips as a <a href="#">major participant</a> .



American Exploration & Production Council (AXPC) · Oil & Gas · \$230,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Washington, D.C.
<b>Background</b>	A major trade organization representing the U.S. oil and gas industry.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and the Interior Department on behalf of AXPC on " <a href="#">upstream oil and gas permitting reform</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	In November 2025, the White House <a href="#">nominated</a> Steve Pearce (former Congress member) to lead BLM; the Senate <a href="#">confirmed</a> him in May 2026. Also in May 2026, BLM <a href="#">finalized the rescission</a> of the Public Lands Rule, which had required conservation be given equal weight to extractive uses.

USA Rare Earth · Mining/Rare Earths · \$220,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Stillwater, OK
<b>Background</b>	An American rare earths venture advancing a mine in Texas and a processing and manufacturing facility in Oklahoma.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, the Export-Import Bank, Energy, Defense, and the White House on " <a href="#">issues related to supporting the building of a rare earth mine and processing plant in the United States</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	The Commerce Department <a href="#">invested</a> \$1.6 billion in USA Rare Earth. As part of the deal, Cantor Fitzgerald — now led by Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick's two sons, <a href="#">Brandon and Kyle Lutnick</a> — helped arrange an additional <a href="#">\$1.5 billion in private financing</a> .

Kinterra Capital · Mining/Rare Earths · \$220,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Toronto, Canada
<b>Background</b>	Canadian private equity firm investing in critical mineral assets with projects on federal land in Arizona, Nevada, and Michigan. Two investments — New World Resources' <a href="#">Antler Project</a> in Arizona and <a href="#">White Pine Copper</a> 's Michigan project — still require federal permits. A subsidiary controls a proposed <a href="#">copper-gold-zinc project in New Mexico's Sangre de Cristo Mountains</a> that <a href="#">residents fear could contaminate the Pecos and Santa Fe rivers</a> .
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, Interior, and the Export-Import Bank on behalf of Kinterra on " <a href="#">permitting of mining projects and general critical minerals advocacy</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	In April 2026, USFS and BLM <a href="#">issued a notice formally reversing</a> a Biden-era effort to prohibit mining in the Upper Pecos watershed, paving the way for Kinterra's New Mexico project.

Delaware North Companies · Food & Beverage · \$200,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Buffalo, NY
<b>Background</b>	Global venue management and hospitality company with major concessions contracts across the national park system.



<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Delaware North on " <a href="#">issues related to concessions contracts.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	Trump <a href="#">nominated</a> Scott Socha, President of Parks and Resorts at Delaware North, to be Director of the National Park Service. The nomination was subsequently <a href="#">withdrawn</a> .

<b>Devon Energy</b> · Oil & Gas · \$190,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Oklahoma City, OK
<b>Background</b>	Large independent oil and gas company with holdings across multiple U.S. basins. Devon <a href="#">accounted for \$2.6 billion of a record \$4 billion sale</a> of oil and gas exploration rights on BLM-managed lands in May 2026, <a href="#">acquiring 16,300 undeveloped acres</a> in the Delaware Basin.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Devon on " <a href="#">upstream oil and gas production on federal land, regulatory reform, and permitting reform.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	Republicans' 2025 budget legislation included <a href="#">several provisions</a> requiring quarterly lease sales, removing leasing restrictions, and reducing royalty rates. BLM has <a href="#">begun using</a> expedited lease reviews.

<b>Santos Ltd</b> · Oil & Gas · \$180,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Adelaide, Australia
<b>Background</b>	Australia's second-largest oil and gas producer. Santos is heavily invested — <a href="#">more than \$3 billion</a> — in the Pikka project on Alaska's North Slope, which <a href="#">just moved into production</a> in May 2026. Santos also holds exploration leases in the NPR-A.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied DOE, Interior, and EPA on behalf of Santos on " <a href="#">onshore oil and gas issues on federal and non-federal lands</a> " and the 'Waters of the United States.'
<b>Outcomes</b>	In January 2026, the White House <a href="#">rescinded centralized NEPA regulatory authority</a> , pushing reviews to individual agencies. In May 2026, Interior <a href="#">announced</a> a new effort to expedite NEPA reviews for oil and gas infrastructure in the NPR-A.

<b>Marubeni Oil and Gas</b> · Oil & Gas · \$180,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Houston, TX
<b>Background</b>	The energy arm of Marubeni Corp/, one of Japan's major general trading conglomerates. Historically focused on deepwater oil fields and infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Interior and EPA on behalf of Marubeni on issues related to " <a href="#">Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the Environmental Protection Agency.</a> "
<b>Outcomes</b>	Republicans' 2025 budget legislation <a href="#">mandated</a> 30 Gulf of Mexico oil and gas lease sales by 2040 and cut royalties for offshore drillers. In November 2025, Interior <a href="#">announced a plan</a> to open 1.3 billion acres of coastal waters to new development. DOI <a href="#">plans to consolidate</a> the two federal offshore drilling regulators.



Hudbay Minerals Inc. · Mining/Rare Earths · \$180,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Toronto, Canada
<b>Background</b>	Canadian firm developing an open-pit copper mine in Arizona's Santa Rita Mountains. After a federal court blocked the original project on public land, Hudbay pivoted to private land for Phase 1. Phase 2 requires federal permitting. A longstanding <a href="#">Bernhardt client</a> .
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress and Interior on behalf of Hudbay on " <a href="#">mining reform and mine plan</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	December 2025: U.S. House passed the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act, which <a href="#">would effectively overturn</a> the legal decision that forced Hudbay to private land. February 2026: USFS <a href="#">proposed overhauling hard-rock mining regulations</a> in a way that would allow Hudbay to expand onto federal land. April 2026: USDA <a href="#">finalized a rule</a> removing mandatory NEPA public scoping, which would prevent comment delays on Hudbay's federal expansion.

Contango Silver & Gold / Contango Ore · Mining/Rare Earths · \$150,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Fairbanks, AK
<b>Background</b>	American mining company with operations entirely in Alaska. Priority project is the Johnson Tract gold-copper-zinc mine on Native-owned land.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, Interior, Commerce, and the White House on behalf of Contango on " <a href="#">issues associated with mining in Alaska</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	September 2025: Interior <a href="#">expanded categorical exclusions</a> from NEPA for transportation and utility corridors in Alaska, making it easier to construct a coastal staging area for the Johnson Tract project. December 2025: Johnson Tract was entered into <a href="#">the FAST-41 expedited permitting program</a> .

Valhalla Metals · Mining/Rare Earths · \$60,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Vancouver, BC, Canada
<b>Background</b>	Proposes a copper-zinc-lead-gold-silver <a href="#">mine</a> in the Ambler Mining District of Northwest Alaska. In spring 2026, Valhalla reached a <a href="#">deal</a> to buy mining claims from Teck Minerals in exchange for a 35% stake in Valhalla. The project depends on construction of the more than 200-mile Ambler Road.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, Interior, the White House, and Commerce on behalf of Valhalla on " <a href="#">issues related to the completion of the supplemental environmental impact statement for the Ambler Road</a> ."
<b>Outcomes</b>	The Trump administration <a href="#">reversed</a> the Biden administration's position in October 2025, granting permits for the Ambler Access Road. Valhalla publicly <a href="#">applauded</a> the decision.

5E Advanced Materials · Mining/Rare Earths · \$120,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Southern California



<b>Background</b>	An American minerals company with a <a href="#">boron mine</a> in Southern California.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Interior on behalf of 5E Advanced Materials on the <a href="#">list of critical minerals</a> .
<b>Outcomes</b>	In November 2025, the U.S. Geological Survey <a href="#">included</a> boron on its list of critical minerals, making boron projects eligible for Defense Production Act grants, EXIM financing, and expedited permitting. November 2025: 5E Advanced Materials <a href="#">announced talks</a> with Los Alamos National Laboratory to receive \$20 million in federal support.

<b>Solidus Resources</b> · Mining/Rare Earths · \$100,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Reno, Nevada
<b>Background</b>	An American minerals company advancing a <a href="#">gold project</a> in Nevada.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Interior on behalf of Solidus on issues related to the <a href="#">Spring Valley project in Nevada</a> .
<b>Outcomes</b>	May 2025: Solidus <a href="#">received a letter of interest</a> for up to \$835 million in EXIM financing. July 2025: BLM <a href="#">issued a record of decision</a> on the Spring Valley project.

<b>Strata Production Co</b> · Oil & Gas · \$70,000	
<b>Headquarters</b>	New Mexico
<b>Background</b>	Small family-owned independent oil and gas company operating on roughly 20,000 acres of mostly federal land in New Mexico.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Bernhardt Group lobbied Congress, the White House, and Interior on behalf of Strata on <a href="#">"upstream issues in New Mexico."</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Republicans' 2025 budget legislation included <a href="#">provisions</a> requiring quarterly lease sales, eased permitting, and lower royalty rates. In September 2025: Interior <a href="#">expanded categorical exclusions</a> from NEPA for well modifications, short pipeline construction, and new exploratory wells.

