



September 5, 2025

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

Re: American Prairie Reserve Grazing Permits in Eastern Montana

Dear Secretary Burgum:

We write today, as senior leaders representing the State of Montana, to share with you an issue of great importance to us and our citizens. Since 2017, American Prairie Reserve (APR) has been in the process of seeking the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) approval to change livestock grazing permits into permits to graze their non-production, "rewilded" conservation bison herd. Under the Biden Administration, BLM issued a decision to grant the requested permits on a number of BLM grazing allotments in eastern Montana. The State of Montana, grazing districts, and livestock industry groups all appealed BLM's decision, as it violated federal laws like the Taylor Grazing Act and National Environmental Policy Act. Those appeals have been working through the administrative hearings process at the U.S. Department of the Interior since 2022.

While the permits themselves are legally fraught, we thought it would be helpful to share, more broadly, why this issue is of such significant importance to Montanans.

For us, a decision in favor of APR will re-shape the entire landscape of our state. Montana's most profitable economic industry, for decades, has been agriculture. Agriculture drives our economy, sustains our small rural towns, and is the cultural epicenter of our state. Throughout Montana, families farm and ranch the same land that their ancestors homesteaded on behalf of this nation. Facing drought, wildfire, subzero winters, disease, down markets, and generational transition, these families sacrifice, committing themselves not for financial gain, but for something bigger: their families, their communities, the health of the land, and the nourishment of this country. As Montanans, we are tremendously grateful for the sacrifices and investments our farmers and ranchers make every day, and our collective leadership is committed to defending and securing the long-term viability of their livelihoods.

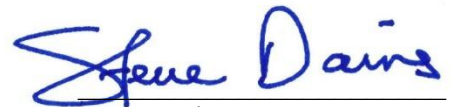
APR is dedicated to “re-wilded,” free-roaming bison and converting Montana’s historic farms and ranches into the largest wildlife refuge in the continental United States. The effect of this change would remove immense swaths of land from production agriculture with far reaching implications and undermine the proud heritage of these small, agriculture-focused communities. It also threatens the economic vitality of our most important industry, decreasing agricultural production revenue and directly impacting industries downstream that shape our overall economy. Once the damage is done, and these generational farms and ranches are gone, they cannot be brought back.

We are incredibly grateful for the leadership you have brought to the U.S. Department of the Interior. Thanks to you and President Donald J. Trump, we are seeing meaningful changes in Montana. We hope our unified perspective is helpful as you closely assess this matter further.

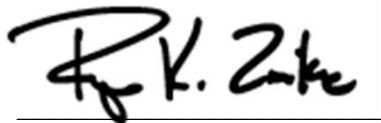
Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress



Tim Sheehy
United States Senator



Troy Downing
Member of Congress