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April 13, 2026

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Secretary Doug Burgum  
1849 C Street NW  
Mail Stop 6038 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

The Teton County Wyoming Board of County Commissioners writes to express our gratitude to you and your colleagues in the National Park Service (NPS) for your conscientious efforts to implement both the intent and letter of the Secretarial Order (SO) 3434 – Strengthening Coordination with Gateway Communities.

Teton County, Wyoming, is the proud home of the entirety of Grand Teton National Park and approximately 42 percent of Yellowstone National Park. In a March 2026 news release, the NPS noted that Yellowstone National Park was the third most frequently visited national park, with 4,762,988 visitors in 2025, and Grand Teton National Park followed closely behind as the eighth most frequently visited national park, supporting 3,800,648 visitors in 2025. These national parks are also essential to our local quality of life, environmental health, and economic prosperity. As such, we consider Teton County to be a gateway community for both national parks pursuant to Section 3 of SO 3434.

SO 3434 establishes policy to enhance coordination and strengthen partnerships with gateway communities. The explicit goals of the order are to:

- Enhance coordination and partnerships
- Deepen collaborative planning
- Commit to meaningful engagement
- Institutionalize shared stewardship

We are grateful for the long history of collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships between these two national parks and Teton County, Wyoming. Due to geography, history, and federal legislation, Teton County interacts significantly more with Grand Teton National Park than with Yellowstone National Park. Nevertheless, we appreciate the manner in which both parks work closely with Teton County on all matters of regional conservation and visitation management, including wildlife protection, water quality, transportation, and promotion.

We are grateful for the frequent communication and collaboration, especially with Superintendent Jenkins and Grand Teton National Park. Furthermore, we greatly value gestures such as



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Superintendent Jenkins's membership in our local Rotary Club and regular presence of the Superintendent and other staff at local events.

Management of these national parks, coupled with the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) management of Bridger-Teton National Forest and Caribou-Targhee National Forest, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) management of the National Elk Refuge, and parcels managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as well as Snake River management decisions of the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and wildlife and ecological research led by the U.S. Geological Survey Ecosystems Mission Area, profoundly enhance our community and improve our economic prosperity.

We appreciate all opportunities to strengthen our relationship with the leaders of both parks. We are also pleased to report that engagement with our community has been consistent, robust, and respectful. We do not agree with the supposition that, in our case, a formal structure or mandated quarterly coordination meetings helps strengthen this engagement; however, if the Secretary of Interior deems them necessary and productive, we look forward to participation.

Given the structure that SO 3434 envisions, we respectfully offer three suggestions for improving the decision-making processes and strengthening the relationship between these two iconic national parks and our gateway community:

- 1. Keep public lands in public hands.** We enthusiastically endorse the message of [Wyoming Senate Resolution SJ0009](#), which both the Wyoming Senate and House recently passed overwhelmingly and Wyoming's Governor signed into law. SJ0009 states that *the Wyoming Legislature opposes any state or federal legislation or policy that promotes the broad or indiscriminate sale or exchange of public lands*. Public lands should only be removed from the federal estate pursuant to [Recreation & Public Purposes Act](#) or the [Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976](#) after thorough public input and consultation. Our concern includes land managed by NPS, USFS, USFWS, and BLM, which are essential for the large-scale landscape conservation upon which our national parks depend.
- 2. Reverse the harmful cuts in agency funding and staffing that have occurred since 2025.** These cuts dramatically undermine the ability of Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park to carry out the collaborative functions that SO 3434 envisions, including enhanced coordination and strengthened partnerships with gateway communities. The recent cuts also compromise the capacity of the national parks to carry out their basic statutory functions that make them a good neighbor, such as wildfire suppression, visitor management, water quality, science-based ecosystem stewardship, and all other functions of managing the third and eighth most heavily visited and beloved national parks. These cuts further undermine the health of wildlife populations, undermine Teton County's



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economic prosperity and tax revenue, and undermine the integrity of Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park, while simultaneously increasing the risk catastrophic wildfire and other ecosystem threats.

- 3. Protect and enhance the inherent value of Gand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park.** The American people value Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park, because they are wildlife preserves and places where people can connect with nature and wild landscapes through enduring and dispersed recreational activities such as wildlife observation, cold water fishing, hiking, climbing, cross country and backcountry skiing, boating, and other outdoor activities. Please protect these activities and the opportunity for solitude and resist the temptation to add entertainments that cater to amusement-based recreation. Amusement-based visitation undermines the long-term attraction and integrity of our national parks, and we strongly oppose adding amusements to Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park or managing these iconic landscapes for the amusement of visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective.

Sincerely,

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Mark Newcomb, Chair  
Teton County Board of County Commissioners

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Attest: Maureen E. Murphy  
Teton County Clerk

CC: Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins; Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Cam Sholly