

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Burgum:

Yosemite National Park is a cornerstone of the National Park System and is one of California's crown jewels. President Theodore Roosevelt once said that "nothing in the world is more beautiful than the Yosemite" and that our national parks should be "preserved" and "their majestic beauty all unmarred." Yosemite is a national treasure preserved for the benefit of the American people. Its continued beauty, status as a wildlife sanctuary, and source of enjoyment is contingent upon preservation and proper maintenance of its land—not parts being sold off to enrich nearby private property owners. We are extremely concerned that the Department of the Interior is considering selling off portions of the park to private development and we strongly oppose the proposed land transfer.¹

Recent reporting indicates that since early 2025, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service have been considering a proposal to exchange or convey an interest in an approximately quarter-mile strip of federally managed public land within Yosemite National Park to facilitate access to an 83-acre privately owned ranch. This is not the first time this property has sought to have private access to Yosemite, with federal courts blocking this right to access in both 2007 and 2012.² Now that the ranch has a new owner, they are once again seeking to acquire this land to enhance the value of their property, and the political leadership at DOI is pressuring career staff to approve the exchange.

At its core, this proposal appears to provide a private benefit at the expense of land that belongs to all Americans. This transaction does not seek to expand public access to Yosemite, improve visitor services, or address transportation deficiencies in park access. Rather, this land exchange seeks to merely cut down on driving time for a select few on private property. Any decision to relinquish public land to private ownership should be supported by a clear and compelling public benefit, not merely the economic interests of a private party.

We were alarmed that the Department submitted to Congress a proposal to use money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) authority to facilitate this exchange. That fund exists to acquire and protect public lands for the benefit of the American public—not sell them off to corporate developers. In response to the Department's request to fund this exchange

¹ NOTUS, "Trump's Quietly Working to Give Part of Yosemite to a Private Developer" (Aug. 28, 2026) <https://www.notus.org/agencies/trump-administration-yosemite-private-developer-deal>

² See *Hazel Green Ranch, LLC v. U.S. Department of the Interior*, No. 10-16519, 2012 WL 3043030 (9th Cir. July 27, 2012) (mem.)

through the LWCF, the Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee did not agree to move forward on this project due to our objection.

Further, in response to inquiries from Congress, the Department indicated that it has not identified any land to be exchanged for the parcel of Yosemite National Park that the Department is seeking to sell to the private developer. This gives further credence to the notion that this exchange is not being done in the public interest, but rather solely to benefit a private developer. In its justification for the LWCF proposal, the Department indicated that this exchange was a “priority,” while providing no compelling explanation for why it was in the interest of the United States to pursue this exchange. Instead, when explaining the need for the project, the Department simply stated that the private landowner requested an interest in federally owned property within the national park.

Public lands belong in public hands. Protection of public lands is a bipartisan issue, overwhelmingly supported by the American people from all walks of life. We oppose any effort to privatize, sell off, give away, or otherwise undermine the continued existence of public lands, in Yosemite or across the country. We ask that you honor congressional objections and abandon this effort to sell off a piece of Yosemite National Park.

Sincerely,



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, House
Natural Resources Committee



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



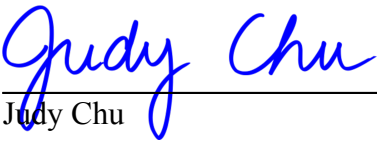
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



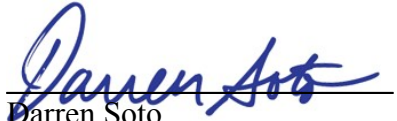
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



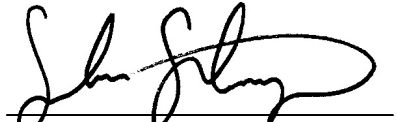
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



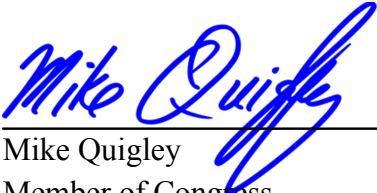
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



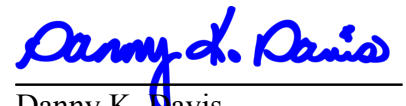
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



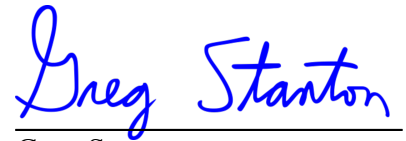
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



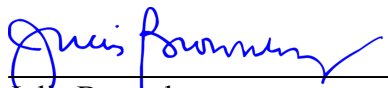
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



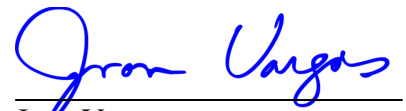
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



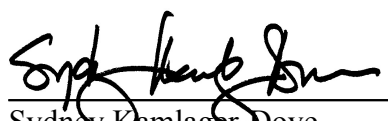
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



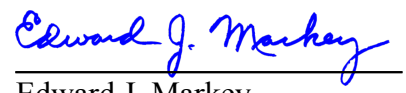
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



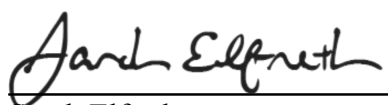
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



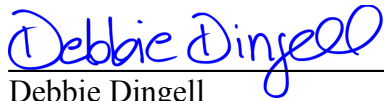
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Energy and Natural
Resources



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



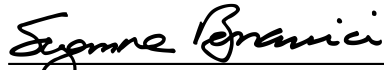
Andy Kim
United States Senator



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



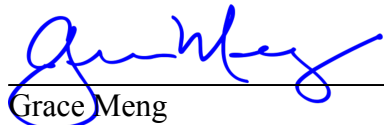
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



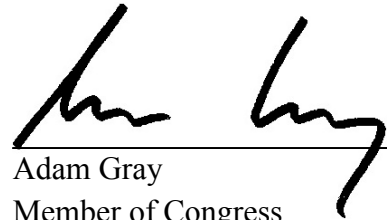
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



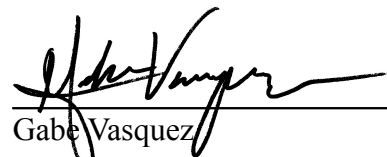
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Adam Gray
Member of Congress



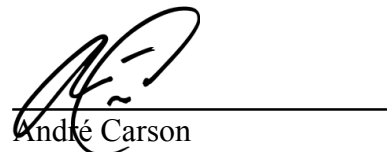
Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



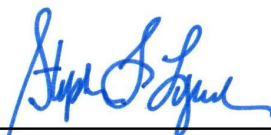
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



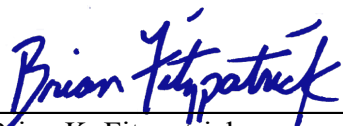
André Carson
Ranking Member, Aviation
Subcommittee



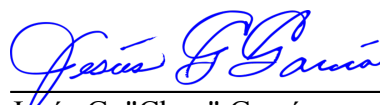
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liecardo
Member of Congress



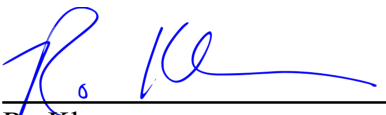
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



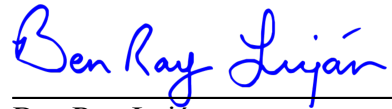
Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



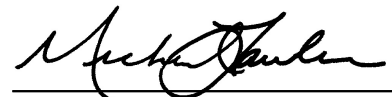
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



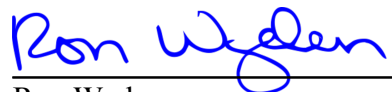
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



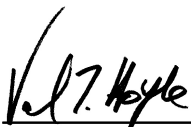
Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



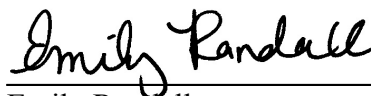
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



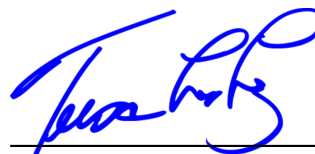
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



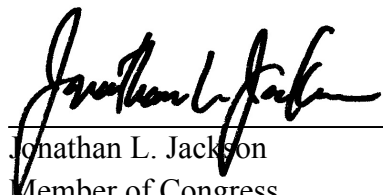
Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



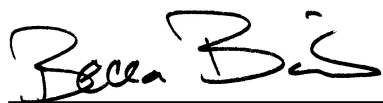
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



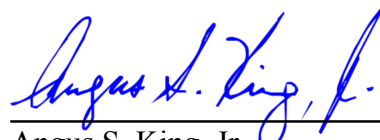
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



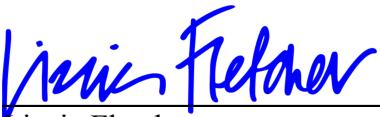
Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



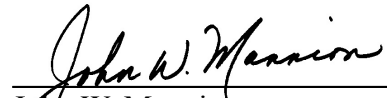
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



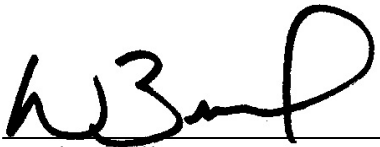
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



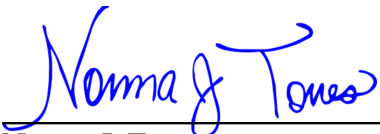
John W. Mannon
Member of Congress



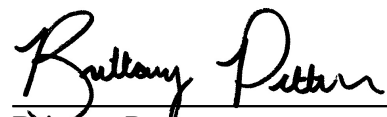
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



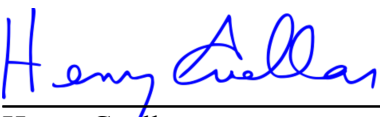
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



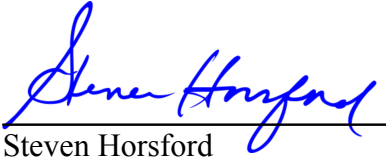
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



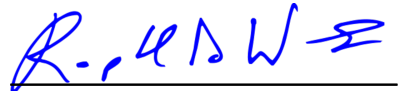
Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



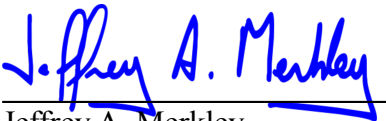
Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



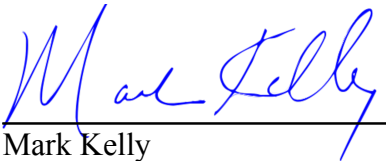
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



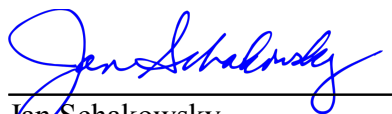
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



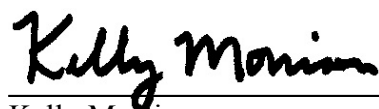
Adenita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



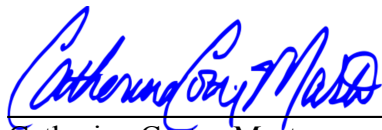
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



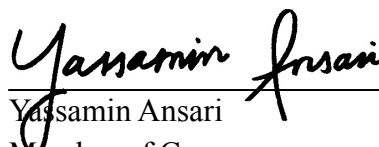
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



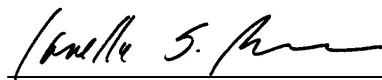
Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



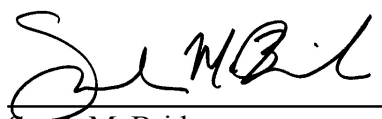
Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



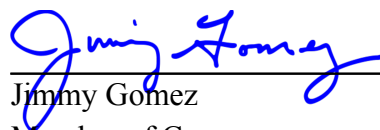
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



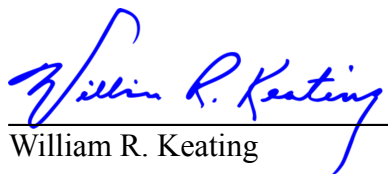
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



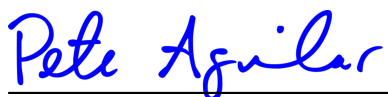
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
United States Senator



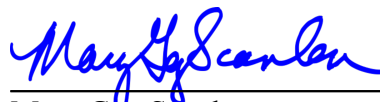
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



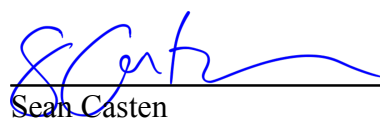
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



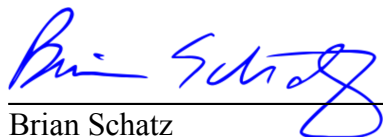
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



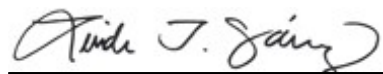
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



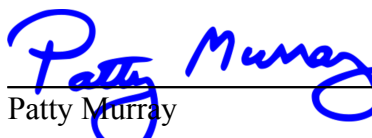
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



George Latimer
Member of Congress



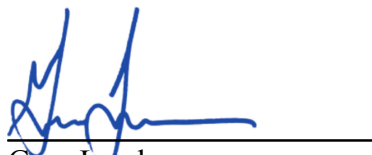
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



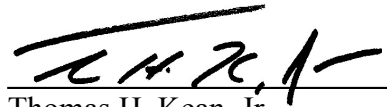
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress