



Heinrich's Efforts to Keep Public Lands in Public Hands

As Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) has been leading the fight to keep public lands in public hands, especially as Donald Trump and Elon Musk work to sell off our public lands to fund their billionaire tax handouts.

On April 30, at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee [hearing](#), Ranking Member Heinrich [demanded answers](#) from the nominee for the U.S. Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Lands and Mineral Management about her support of divesting from public lands. While questioning the nominee, Heinrich made clear that, “This land belongs to all Americans— including every single one of my constituents. Americans highly value their ability to access these lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreational uses.”

On April 21, [Heinrich urged the Trump Administration to leave all national monuments intact](#) — including New Mexico’s Organ Mountains, Rio Grande del Norte, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks. Heinrich’s demand came in anticipation of harmful executive orders to be announced by the Trump Administration, including one that will purportedly target America’s national monuments.

On April 2, Heinrich [released a statement slamming the Trump Administration's plan to sell off America's public lands](#) to pay for tax handouts to billionaires. Heinrich stated, “If they succeed, Donald Trump and Elon Musk will sell off your right to access the places you know and love: The place you first learned to fish or harvested your first elk. The campground your family goes to on long weekends. The trail you hike to clear your head. The site that was sacred to your ancestors and is now sacred to you. All of these places could be up for auction to the highest bidder if Republicans have their way.”

On March 6, [Heinrich hosted a virtual roundtable with public lands employees fired by President Trump and Elon Musk](#). Heinrich heard from professionals from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service, as well as small business owner, Nick Streit, who owns the Taos Fly Shop near the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument in northern New Mexico.

On February 25, [Heinrich demanded transparency on the Trump Administration's plans to roll back protections for public lands](#) after the Department of Interior failed to disclose it to the public after missing a key deadline.

On February 10, [Heinrich sounded the alarm and demanded the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum immediately take action to resolve looming staffing shortages at the National Park Service](#). Heinrich's demand followed President Trump's hiring freeze, his cancellation of thousands of job offers for seasonal National Park Service employees, and his buyout offers made without legal authority. President Trump's actions pave the way for a damaging loss of staff at national parks across the nation in the coming summer months and beyond.

On January 21, Heinrich [released a statement slamming Trump's day one executive order](#) to force a plan to line the pockets of fossil fuel CEOs at the expense of critical public lands and environmental protections.

Legislation to Protect Public Lands

Throughout his time in the Senate, Heinrich has authored, co-sponsored, and co-led dozens of bills to permanently protect public lands across New Mexico and the entire country.

Recently, Heinrich [reintroduced the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act](#) to designate portions of the Gila River, its watershed, and other rivers in the Gila National Forest as Wild and Scenic Rivers. The legislation will be a boon to New Mexico's outdoor economy, while protecting an irreplaceable natural resource for future generations of New Mexicans.

Heinrich also recently [reintroduced his Buffalo Tract Protection Act](#) to permanently withdraw minerals from development on four parcels of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in southern Sandoval County, including the Buffalo Tract and the Crest of Montezuma.

Additionally, Heinrich [reintroduced the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act](#) to protect Chaco Canyon and the greater sacred landscape surrounding the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The legislation will prevent future leasing and development of oil, gas, and minerals on non-Indian federal lands within a 10-mile buffer zone around the park. This proposed Chaco Protection Zone will preserve the sacred sites and cultural patrimony within Chaco Canyon and the surrounding landscape for generations to come.

Heinrich [reintroduced the Pecos Watershed Protection Act](#) to permanently protect Pecos Watershed from new mining operations. Heinrich reintroduced the legislation after the Trump administration [confirmed to Source New Mexico](#) that it will reverse the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service's [decision](#) to protect the Upper Pecos Watershed from new mining operations. On April 14, [Heinrich met with Pecos community leaders](#) to discuss the Pecos Watershed Protection Act.

[Heinrich also led an amendment to prevent the sale of public lands](#) in Republicans' budget resolution. Heinrich's amendment was blocked by Senate Republicans as [part of an effort to fund their tax breaks for billionaires](#).

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