

## United States Senate

April 30, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Haaland:

Thank you for taking time to speak with me prior to your confirmation. I am writing to express my concern regarding a number of job-killing executive actions the Biden Administration has already taken, and to reiterate the importance of protecting Florida's environment and natural resources.

As Governor of Florida, I fought for and secured a commitment from the Department of Interior (DOI) and the Trump Administration to extend the moratorium on drilling off Florida's Gulf Coast for 10 years. My expectation is that the Biden Administration will honor that commitment to keep Florida's coastlines pristine.

It is also important that Florida's federal lands are properly maintained. In Florida, vast tracks of the Everglades are managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Throughout my time as Governor, we invested more than \$2 billion to restore the Everglades, resulting in the acceleration of 16 Everglades projects, sending more water south and providing billions of gallons of water storage around Lake Okeechobee. According to DOI, as of 2018, the NPS's deferred maintenance backlog sits at \$11.92 billion.<sup>1</sup> Addressing the ongoing maintenance backlog is important to protecting our environment, and it is my hope that this will be a top priority of the department moving forward.

Like all federal agencies, DOI has an important role to play in protecting our nation against the threats posed by Communist China. As Communist China builds its military to compete with America, they actively work to steal our technology and intellectual property. Yet, the U.S. Government continues to buy critical technology, like drones, with American tax dollars from Chinese companies backed by their communist

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<sup>1</sup> <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11661>

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government. This Congress, I reintroduced the bipartisan *American Security Drone Act* that would bar the U.S. government from procuring Chinese-made drones, which pose a national security risk. DOI recently grounded more than 800 drones manufactured in China or made from Chinese components citing potential cybersecurity risks.<sup>2</sup> I expect that you will keep these drones grounded, and hope we can work together to ensure the Department of Interior does not procure drones that could threaten our national security.

Finally, the Biden Administration has indicated that combatting climate change, as well as many aspects of the Green New Deal, will be a focus across several sectors. I am very concerned with a number of executive actions President Biden has already taken, such as pausing all drilling on federal land for 60 days, pending review, cancelling the Keystone Pipeline and rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, likely at the cost of thousands of American jobs and self-reliance. I am also concerned that the Green New Deal, or any similar proposal, would bankrupt the nation, hurt our economy and kill small businesses with its excessive, unrealistic regulations. I agree that we must address climate change, but we cannot do it at the expense of the American economy. During my time as Governor of Florida, we made record investments in our environment because we grew our economy and had the resources to do so without raising taxes or taking on debt. It is my expectation that in your position as Secretary, you will stand up for American energy independence, protect jobs and small businesses and consider the impact of burdensome regulations on our economy.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", is centered on the page.

Rick Scott  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/signed-so-3379-uas-1.29.2020-508.pdf>