

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 30, 2013

Mr. William L. Vodehnal
Bassett, Nebraska

Dear William:

Thank you for writing. I have heard from many Americans concerned about environmental issues—from pollution reduction to the well-being of our national parks and wildlife. America's natural resources and landscapes are among our most precious treasures, and we have an obligation to protect them for future generations.

That is why my Administration continues to take action to preserve and restore our land, water, and air. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we increased funding for hazardous waste cleanup, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure construction, and projects that improve our Nation's parks and wildlife refuges. I also signed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act—the most extensive expansion of land and water conservation in more than a generation. And my Administration has taken comprehensive action to ensure the integrity of the water sources Americans rely on every day for drinking, swimming, and fishing, and that support farming, tourism, and economic growth.

I have also been proud to designate nine national monuments for permanent protection, including Chimney Rock in the San Juan National Forest in Colorado; the San Juan Islands that are home to bald eagles, orca whales, and harbor seals in Puget Sound; and the Rio Grande del Norte, over 240,000 acres in New Mexico containing scenic stretches of the Rio Grande gorge and extinct volcanoes rising from the Taos Valley floor. These monuments open more opportunities for Americans to connect to the outdoors, provide jobs and economic benefits for local communities, preserve our heritage, and protect America's special places for future generations to enjoy.

To safeguard our natural heritage and historic landmarks, I was also proud to launch the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Building on input from tens of thousands of people across our country, my Administration is joining with communities, landowners, sportsmen, businesses, and partners at every level of government to reconnect Americans with the natural world and lay the foundation for a more sustainable planet. We also established the first comprehensive National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes—ensuring healthy ocean and coastal resources for the many communities and economies that rely on and enjoy them.

We have also taken important steps to reduce the harmful emissions that contribute to climate change and pollute our water and air. For the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change. Its effects—including warmer temperatures, extreme weather, and sea level rise—are being felt across our Nation and around the world. Today, the United States is on the path to a cleaner and more secure energy future, and the dangerous carbon pollution emissions that threaten our communities have fallen to their lowest level in nearly two decades. We will continue to reduce air pollution through clean energy technology, energy efficiency measures for our buildings and appliances, and achievable pollution standards that are reducing toxic pollutants and saving lives. As part of our efforts, we set the first-ever national limits for mercury and other toxins from power plants, which will prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths, 4,700 heart attacks, and 130,000 cases of childhood asthma symptoms each year.

Changing the way we produce and use energy is essential to protecting our environment for future generations. We established the toughest new fuel economy standards in history, which will double the fuel efficiency of our cars and light trucks by the middle of the next decade—saving American families money at the pump while slashing carbon pollution and oil consumption. We also established the first-ever national fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission standards for commercial trucks, vans, and buses built in 2014-2018. Our Nation is becoming a global leader in advanced vehicles, and auto dealers are selling more hybrid vehicles than ever before. I am also calling on Congress to use some of our oil and gas revenues to fund an Energy Security Trust that will drive new research and technology to shift our cars and trucks off oil for good. The Trust will support research into a range of cost-effective technologies, including advanced vehicles that run on electricity and alternative fuels.

Thanks in part to my Administration's investments in clean energy—the largest in American history—the United States has doubled renewable energy generation from wind, solar, and geothermal sources. I have also set a goal to double renewable electricity production again by 2020 to build on our momentum and create tens of thousands of American jobs, while continuing to improve the health of our natural environment for all our children and grandchildren.

Thank you, again, for writing. We all share the responsibility to help protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land that supports and sustains us. My Administration remains committed to tackling these and other tough environmental problems—not only for the sake of our natural world, but also for the long-term wellbeing of our families and our economy. I encourage you to learn more about our efforts at www.WhiteHouse.gov/Environment. You can also find out more about the America's Great Outdoors Initiative at AmericasGreatOutdoors.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written in a cursive style.