

MIKE LEE, Utah, *Chairman*
JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming
JAMES E. RISH, Idaho
STEVE DAINES, Montana
TOM COTTON, Arkansas
DAVID McCORMICK, Pennsylvania
JAMES C. JUSTICE, West Virginia
BILL CASSIDY, Louisiana
CINDY HYDE-SMITH, Mississippi
LISA MURKOWSKI, Alaska
JOHN HOEVEN, North Dakota

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6150
WWW.ENERGY.SENATE.GOV

MARTIN HEINRICH, New Mexico
RON WYDEN, Oregon
MARIA CANTWELL, Washington
MAZIE HIRONO, Hawaii
ANGUS S. KING, JR., Maine
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO, Nevada
JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, Colorado
ALEX PADILLA, California
RUBEN GALLEGO, Arizona

WENDY BAIG, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
CHRISTOPHER PRANDONI, MAJORITY DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR
AND CHIEF COUNSEL

JASMINE HUNT, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
SAM E. FOWLER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

September 17, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Secretary Burgum:

I write to request detailed information regarding the Department of the Interior's (Department or DOI) misguided reductions in workforce under the deferred resignation program (DRP). It is clear from recent reporting that the Department's downsizing was executed poorly and costly to taxpayers, to say nothing of its impacts to the Department's mission.

According to a recent report, the Department paid employees more than \$150 million in paid administrative leave to stay at home from the start of the administration through December 31, 2025.¹ Of the 1,764 employees put on administrative leave, more than two-thirds – 1,468 – participated in the DRP² and mostly worked in locations outside of the Beltway—from New Mexico to Ohio to North Carolina.³ Additionally, it appears the Department continues to utilize the DRP.⁴ In April 2026, the Department announced a new round of DRPs and voluntary early retirement offers to employees.⁵

More than one year has passed since the Trump administration introduced the DRP program, but Congress and the American people still do not know the full extent of its impact. To understand the Department's use of the DRP and the total cost shouldered by taxpayers as a result, I request the following data and information by October 1, 2026:

1. The number of employees placed on paid administrative leave since the start of the administration. In responding to this question, please provide the office, agency, or bureau the employee works or worked in; reason for placing the person on administrative leave (*e.g.*, DRP); their grade or level; position title; salary or pay rate; duty station; and the number of days of leave.

¹ "Interior paid \$156 million for employees not to work," Politico (E&E News), August 20, 2026. Available <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2026/08/20/interior-paid-156-million-for-employees-not-to-work-01043096>.

² Id. (see attachment accompanying story: <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/eenews/f/eenews/?id=000001a0-1b3b-d9b2-a7ac-ffb3d580000>).

³ Id. (see excel spreadsheet accompanying story).

⁴ "US Interior Department to reduce staff through deferred resignations, early retirement," April 2, 2026. Reuters. Available: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-interior-department-says-reduce-staff-through-deferred-resignation-early-2026-04-02/>

⁵ Id.

2. The total amount the Department spent (salaries and benefits) on employees placed on paid administrative leave due to the deferred resignation program, since the start of the administration.
3. Provide the following information related to the Department's April 2026 announcement of DRPs and voluntary early retirement offers:
 - a. A detailed breakdown of employees offered the deferred resignation program and early retirement. Please provide the following as part of your response: which office, agency, or bureau the employee works in; their grade or level; position title; salary or pay rate; and duty station.
 - b. The number of employees that have accepted the deferred resignation program and early retirement and are now or have been previously on paid administrative leave. Please provide the following as part of your response: which office, agency, or bureau the employee works in; their grade or level; position title; salary or pay rate; and duty station.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, please contact my staff at (202) 224-4971.

Sincerely,



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