

May 15, 2024

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

Tracy Stone-Manning
Director, Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland and Director Stone-Manning:

We write today to thank you for your leadership in promoting native plants in ecological restoration and land rehabilitation activities and addressing the national native seed supply. We especially want to thank you for committing to establish a National Interagency Seed and Restoration Center which will serve as the scientific, technical, and logistical support center for the nation's restoration and native seed needs and a coordination hub for ecoregional native plant programs and native seed warehouses. The establishment of the center implements a primary recommendation of the National Academy of Sciences in its 2023 report on native seed needs and capacities and is a significant step forward for ecological restoration on our federal lands.

Assuring a sustainable supply of genetically-appropriate native seeds is crucial for our federal lands and biodiversity. Adequate quantities of a diverse assortment of native seeds are necessary for the restoration of the natural ecology to the millions of acres of federal lands annually affected by fire, invasive species, intense storms and human activities. The restored native vegetation supports native wildlife including sage-grouse, desert tortoise, and hundreds of other at-risk species. Because of chronic and significant shortages of genetically-appropriate native seeds, federal land managers continue to plant large acreages with non-native species or cultivars that harm native ecosystems and biological diversity. For example, in 2020, about 7/8 of the grasses and 3/4 of the forbs that BLM purchased for its warehouse were not native source-identified seeds.

While this center is crucial for federal land management, its beneficial effects will transcend the federal estate. Department investments in native seed supplies will drive the agricultural native seed market benefitting tribal, private and other public sector landowners and managers. Department investments in conducting and disseminating research will benefit ecological restoration practitioners nationally and worldwide.

Integral to success will be building capacity in the botanical sciences and ecological restoration in the agencies and the new center.¹ We urge you to commit Inflation Reduction Act funds to launch the new center and increase expert capacity. This funding can serve as a bridge for the center until a permanent budget line and governance structure are established. Also essential will be working closely with Tribal,

¹ BLM has 1.6 botanists for every 10 million acres. This compares to 8.4 botanists per 10 million acres in the US Forest Service. Source: Openpayrolls.com.

public sector, non-profit and private sector partners in developing structure, governance, and early implementation of the center.

As representatives of organizations and businesses involved in ecological restoration, botanical sciences and wildlife conservation, we applaud your leadership to establish adequate native seed supplies and promote excellence in ecological restoration. We look forward to working in partnership on the design and early implementation of the center and offer our continued support in this important endeavor.

With regards,

American Bird Conservancy - Washington D.C.

American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America - Madison, Wisconsin

Appalachian Trail Conservancy - Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council - Jacksonville, Oregon

Arizona Wildlife Federation - Mesa, Arizona

Ash Protection Collaboration Across Wabanakik - Orono, Maine

Association of Ramaytush Ohlone - San Francisco, California

Bella Flora Farm - Applegate, Oregon

Berry Seed Bank - Portland, Oregon

Bird Safe Nashville - Nashville, Tennessee

California Native Seed Supply Collaborative - Berkeley, California

Californians for Western Wilderness - San Francisco, California

Center for Biological Diversity - Tucson, Arizona

Center for Large Landscape Conservation - Bozeman, Montana

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Central Illinois Healthy Community Alliance - Peoria, Illinois

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage - Chester, Maryland

Chicago Botanic Garden - Glencoe, Illinois

Colorado Native Plant Society - Denver, Colorado

Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma - Tulsa/Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Conservation Lands Foundation - Durango, Colorado

Cottage Codgers - Fresno, California

Creekside Center for Earth Observation - Los Gatos, California

Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District - Gold Beach, Oregon

Defenders of Wildlife - Washington D.C.

Delaware Audubon - Newark, Delaware
Endangered Species Coalition - Washington D.C.
Florida Wildlife Federation - Tallahassee , Florida
Forest Partners International - Flourtown, Pennsylvania
Forests Forever - Berkeley, California
FOUR PAWS USA - Boston, Massachusetts
Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve - Redwood City, California
Friends of the Sonoran Desert - Tucson, Arizona
G2 Marketing - Charlottesville, Virginia
Georgia Native Plant Society - , Georgia
Gila Resources Information Project - Silver City, New Mexico
Grand Canyon Trust - Flagstaff, Arizona
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy - Traverse City, Michigan
Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Durango, Colorado
Great Valley Seed Company - Los Banos, California
Healthy Ocean Coalition - Portland, Oregon
Heritage Growers - Chico, CA, California
Heritage Seedlings Inc - Salem, Oregon
Holly Mills Grows - Medford, Oregon
Homegrown National Park - Sharon, Connecticut
Humble Roots Farm & Nursery - Mosier, Oregon
Institute for Applied Ecology - Corvallis, Oregon
Institute for Natural Resources - Portland State University - Portland, Oregon
International Crane Foundation - Baraboo, Wisconsin
Iowa Wildlife Federation - Des Moines, Iowa
Kettle Range Conservation Group - Republic, Washington
Klamath Forest Alliance - Arcata, California
Lane County Audubon Society - Eugene, Oregon
Los Padres ForestWatch - Santa Barbara, California
Lower Rogue Watershed Council - Gold Beach, Oregon
Maricopa Native Seed Library - Phoenix, Arizona
Maryland Ornithological Society - Baltimore, Maryland

McCarty Woods Restoration - Gainesville, Florida
Mississippi Native Plant Society - Clinton, Mississippi
Modoc Nation - Miami, Oklahoma and Tulelake, California
Nashville Chapter, TN Ornithological Society - Nashville, Tennessee
National Aquarium - Baltimore, Maryland
National Parks Conservation Association - Washington D.C.
National Tropical Botanical Garden - Kalaheo, Hawaii
National Wildlife Federation - Reston, Virginia
National Wildlife Refuge Association - Washington D.C.
Native American Seed - Junction, Texas
Native Plant Society of New Mexico - Santa Fe, New Mexico
Native Plant Society of Texas - Fredericksburg, Texas
Native Songbird Care & Conservation - Sebastopol, California
NativeSeed Group - Tracy, California
Natural Areas Association - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Natural Communities Coalition - Irvine, California
Natural Resources Defense Council - Washington D.C.
Nature's Theater - Davis, California
New Mexico Audubon Council - Santa Fe, New Mexico
Nicaragua Center for Community Action - Berkeley, California
Oregon Department of Agriculture - Salem, Oregon
Oregon Natural Desert Association - Bend, Oregon
Partnership for the National Trails System - Washington D.C.
Patagonia - Ventura, California
Pollinator Partnership - San Francisco, California
Pollinator Project Rogue Valley - Phoenix, Oregon
Prairie Rivers Network - Champaign, Illinois
Project Eleven Hundred - Castle Valley, Utah
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility - Silver Spring, Virginia
Purely Organic LLC - Williams, Oregon
Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation - Buffalo, Missouri
Rainier Audubon Society - Auburn, Washington

Restoration Gardening - Oakland, California
Rio Grande Return - Santa Fe, New Mexico
River Partners - Chico, California
Salem Audubon Society - Salem, Oregon
Saw Mill River Audubon - Chappaqua, New York
SC Wildlife Federation - Columbia , South Carolina
Sequoia ForestKeeper - Weldon, California
Sierra Club - Oakland, California
Siskiyou BioSurvey - Eagle Point, Oregon
Siskiyou Permaculture - Ashland, Oregon
Siuslaw SWCD - Florence, Oregon
Society for Ecological Restoration, International Network for Seed-based Restoration (INSR) - Washington D.C.
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council - Ashland, Oregon
South Coast Watershed Council - Gold Beach, Oregon
South San Juan Broadband of Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Durango, Colorado
Southeastern Grasslands Institute, Austin Peay State University - Clarksville, Tennessee
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy - Ashland , Oregon
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance - Salt Lake City, Utah
Strategic Habitat Enhancements - Tucson, Arizona
Tennessee Ornithological Society - Tennessee
Texas Conservation Alliance - Dallas, Texas
The Freshwater Trust - Portland, Oregon
The Nature Conservancy - Arlington, Virginia
The Understory Initiative - Medford, Oregon
The Wilderness Society - Washington D.C.
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation - Portland, Oregon
Tennessee Wildlife Federation - Nashville, Tennessee
Tooley's Trees and Keyline Design - Truchas, New Mexico
Trust for Public Land - San Francisco, California
Tuleyome - Auburn, California
Umpqua Chapter Native Plant Society of Oregon – Roseburg, Oregon
Umpqua Native Plant Partnership - Roseburg, Oregon

Umpqua Watersheds - Roseburg , Oregon
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance - Silver City, New Mexico
Valley Eco - Merced, California
Water League - Cave Junction, Oregon
Western Watersheds Project – Hailey, Idaho
White Mountain Conservation League - Nutrioso, Arizona
Wild Ones Natural Landscapers - Neenah, Wisconsin
WildEarth Guardians - Santa Fe, New Mexico

Copies to:

Laura Daniel-Davis, Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior
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Brenda Mallory, White House Council for Environmental Quality, Director
Shalanda Young, White House Office of Management and Budget, Director
The Honorable Joe Manchin, III, Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable John Barrasso, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior Environment, and
Related Agencies
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior
Environment, and Related Agencies