CONFIRMING A LEADING OIL ADVOCATE AS INTERIOR SECRETARY

Passed: 80-17

SUMMARY:

The Senate approved Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior, putting a long-time ally of the fossil fuel industry in charge of overseeing the nation's public lands and natural resources (*January 30, 2025, Roll Call No. 26*).

BACKGROUND:

America's public lands are home to irreplaceable wildlife and habitat. Iconic species such as wolves, grizzly bears, bison and migratory birds call public lands their home. The Department of the Interior safeguards these natural resources, overseeing the management and conservation of roughly one-quarter of the U.S. land area and 300 million acres on the outer continental shelf.

Pressure to expand fossil fuel development on public lands has intensified in recent years, threatening to fragment critical wildlife habitat, pollute water sources and accelerate climate change. Fossil fuel extraction on public lands comes at the expense of species already under stress from habitat loss and rising temperatures. Policies that prioritize extraction over conservation risk undermining the integrity of the nation's bedrock environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Against this backdrop, the Senate approved President Trump's nominee, former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, as Secretary of the Interior. Confirmation of Burgum, a close ally of the oil and gas industry, effectively empowers an advocate of "drill, baby, drill" policies to implement the Trump administration's agenda of opening public lands to increased development and privatization.

OUTCOME:

On January 30, 2025, the Senate confirmed Doug Burgum as the Secretary of Interior, 80-17. "No" was the pro-conservation vote.