

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2025

Acting Administrator Stephen Ehikian
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Acting Administrator Ehikian:

As Representatives of the Central Coast, we write to demand that you halt planned facility closures at the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) that would impact our constituents in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. These are critical agencies that help support our local economies' vitality and the American people. These indiscriminate closures, done in an arbitrary and capricious manner, are antithetical to our Constitution and values as Americans.

Trying to shutter the physical locations for these vital agencies is reflective of the illegal actions undertaken by DOGE to undermine the effectiveness of our government rather than working to improve it to better serve our constituents and the American people.

DOI was created by an act of Congress in 1849 and is critical in managing our nation's cultural heritage—including our public lands, which have been a boon to our local recreational economies. In fact, California is home to the nation's largest active outdoor industry economy, contributing \$73.8 billion in economic spending annually. This is not by coincidence. California is also home to nine national parks—more than any other state. The Central Coast of California alone is home to the Channel Islands National Park and Pinnacles National Park. The positive contribution to our economies is reflected by the fact that in 2023, 36.2 million visitors to California's national parks spent \$3.2 billion, supporting 39,678 jobs.

Likewise, NOAA is essential to America's innovation and economic vitality. Under the Department of Commerce, NOAA is tasked with the critical mission to provide daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings, and support marine commerce. NOAA's mission is carried out by some of our nation's top scientists. The products and cutting-edge research generated by NOAA helps support more than one-third of America's gross domestic product. ¹Everyday Americans rely on NOAA's science for basic day-to-day needs like determining the weather. This information is critical for commercial and public safety needs. It is NOAA's data that helps provide the public with free and lifesaving alerts when Americans are facing natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires.

Furthermore, with more than \$59 billion in agricultural sales, California leads the nation as the top producer of agricultural products in the United States. Throughout the world, California was the world's largest agriculture producer in 2022. Closing USDA offices only serves to harm American families and our farmers who rely on USDA to ensure food safety, manage our natural resources, and support our food supply chains and economic well-being.

Finally, the U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of public lands and provides potentially life-saving expertise in fire management. Our constituents are no strangers to wildfires. Fires in the Western United States

have only become larger, more destructive and deadly. We cannot pretend that this is not a reality that many Americans are experiencing.

Efforts to justify these closures as a measure to help better serve the American people is, at best, disingenuous. As outlined above, these agencies are critical to our nations and region's wellbeing and help maintain our economic vitality to support our way of life. Again, we demand that you cease these office closures. Further we ask that you let us know under what authority are you acting to close these offices without, at the very least, consultation with Congress—a co-equal branch of government.

Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

