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April 30, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear ~~Secretary~~ Ken Salazar:

I have appreciated our discussions over the past few weeks about issues that are of great importance to me and my home state of Utah. They have been productive and I look forward to continuing to work with you to resolve these issues as expeditiously as possible. Thank you for your openness and willingness to work toward finding solutions.

I have had a chance to review Solicitor-Designate Hilary Tompkins's written responses to the questions I submitted for the record last week, and have several additional concerns to discuss with you before I can support her nomination moving forward.

Although I appreciate the time that both she and your department devoted to answering my questions, the answers seem to be retrospective in nature. I clearly understand the department's past position. I need your clarification on whether you plan to change that position.

As we have discussed, I am deeply concerned that some in the department are coordinating with certain members of the environmental community to undermine the settlement agreement between the United States and the state of Utah. Before I can be comfortable moving forward with the nomination of Interior's chief legal officer, I need to be absolutely certain that both she and your department support the settlement agreement as it is currently constituted, will defend its terms, and will vigorously

oppose any attempt by outside groups to undermine or weaken the settlement agreement in any form or venue.

As a first step, I would ask the department to provide me with supplemental responses to the same questions that I submitted to Ms. Tompkins last week indicating: (1) the department's current position on these issues, including specific answers to the questions; and (2) indicate for each response whether or not that position will change. For convenience, I have included Ms. Tompkins's answers as an attachment.

Again, I appreciate your willingness to continue our discussion on these critical issues. I look forward to reviewing the department's responses to these questions. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator

Attachment