



MEMBER



**OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

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June 29, 2006

Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

I have been intending to send you a letter of congratulations on your appointment as the new Secretary of the Interior but, instead, am writing to you to express my total dismay regarding your first major action in office. Recreation interests in this country have for many years been urging the Department of the Interior to recognize recreation as an important element of land management plans – as important as environmental protection and conservation. Your announcement that the DOI will consider conservation above all other concerns sets this effort back to the Clinton era!

I work very closely with Congressman Pombo and the House Resources Committee and have testified several times regarding the ESA and DOI land management policy in the U.S. When recreation interests heard that you support the effort to reform the Endangered Species Act we all applauded your selection as the new Secretary of the Interior. Your action to once again move recreation into the back seat behind conservation has us scratching our heads in wonder.

Representatives from the off-highway vehicle recreation community met with former Secretary Norton shortly before she left office. She asked for our input on DOI management of public lands and listened to our concerns. She assured us that the DOI would continue to make recreation a major concern and rank it equal with conservation. Her ruling on RS2477 routes just before she left office appears to support her desire to keep public land access open to the public.

I represent a national non-profit trade association that speaks for companies involved with the motorized off-highway vehicle industry nationwide. This industry represents a major economic engine in this country. In California alone it is estimated that the motorized off-highway recreation industry generates about nine billion dollars in economic activity annually. We believe that protection of the environment is crucial but providing opportunities to the ever-increasing demand for recreation opportunities should be equally important.

Coming from Idaho, I am sure you are aware that millions of acres of public lands – mostly in the west – have been closed to vehicle access with, in many cases, little or no scientific evidence that the closures are necessary. BLM Field Managers have the

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authority to implement “Emergency Closures” at their discretion without high-level management approval. “Species of concern” and “Sensitive Species” are being treated in BLM Land Management Plans with the same level of protection as listed species. All of this has been taking place while public demand for recreation opportunities of all types has been exploding. Recreation leaders believed that the appointment of Dirk Kempthorne to the position of Secretary of the Interior would bring some sensible balance to the management of public lands. Instead it looks like you are buying into the environmental extremist agenda!

I have held a seat on the BLM’s California Desert District Advisory Council (appointed by your predecessor) for over seven years so I am not just throwing out meaningless rhetoric. I would be happy to provide you with overwhelming data to support my claims. With the exception of a few advocates of the religion of environmentalism, who sit on the Council, the majority of the other fifteen Council members agree with my position. Your position on the lack of importance of recreation on public lands has many members believing that our efforts are a total waste of time!

I understand your desire to keep public lands pristine for future generations. You might consider my desire to keep some public lands available for recreation for future generations. When I take advantage of motorized recreation opportunities on public lands it is often with four generations of family members. I don’t know of any other activity that has teenagers and young adults waiting anxiously to spend their weekends and vacations with their families (especially when you consider other free-time activities available to them). I place this kind of recreation at a level at least as important as protecting the MilkVetch Plant in the Imperial Sand Dunes, or the Scarab Dunes Beetle, or the Fairy Shrimp!

If you think I am just another dissenter wanting to attack the DOI, I suggest you talk to Kathleen Clarke, Mike Pool, Congressman Pombo, Congressman Hunter, or Congressman Filner about my efforts to support the BLM’s image with the recreating public. In the future I will find it very difficult to convince my fellow recreationists that the BLM is really promoting balanced land management if you insist on promoting conservation over recreation.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Denner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Roy Denner, President & CEO  
Off-Road Business Association