

September 9, 2020

Honorable David L. Bernhardt  
Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

As North Carolina black church leaders, we urge you to immediately remove William Pendley for Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Mr. Pendley's words and deeds over the course of decades outline why he is ill fit to serve in a leadership role in government. With his penchant for taking actions against communities of color and native communities, he should not head up the BLM. Overseeing 247.3 million acres public lands would require him to interact with and uphold the interests of nonwhite communities. This is a task he has not only shown disdain for but also has an inability to accomplish.

Mr. Pendley's racist rhetoric and actions are well documented. He has sought to undo protections for sacred sites and has actively worked against the interests of Native Americans and tribal nations. He has represented a county defending the Trump Administration's reduction in size of the Bears Ears National Monument, which is considered sacred to multiple tribes. He also fought against the Interior Department on behalf of the oil and gas company Solenex, which sought to drill in the pristine Badger-Two Medicine area of Montana, considered sacred to the Blackfeet people. These past actions are significant since many of the public lands the BLM manages border tribal land.

His racist rhetoric and actions have not stopped with the discrimination against native people. As a lawyer, he argued for the elimination of the Department of Transportation's program favoring "socially and economically disadvantaged people." He recently stated that "Black Lives Matter was built on that terrible lie — a lie the mainstream media perpetrated, that cowardly politicians, fearful of saying 'all lives matter,' emboldened." He also pointedly asked, "How many have died and how many more will die because of diversity and race-based decision making?" And, Pendley tragically described environmental justice as "(a)nother imaginary issue pushed by progressives." To complete his racist portfolio, he has referred to undocumented immigrants as "a cancer" and faulted them for "violent crime" and "crowded schools."

His targeting of underserved, minority communities is appalling and should immediately disqualify him for serving in any sort of leadership role, particularly the head of a taxpayer-funded agency.

Mr. Pendley has also stated radical anti-science and anti-conservation positions, such as calling climate change “junk science.” Since public lands offer hope at addressing climate change and improving human health, including for communities of color, we cannot stand by and accept his confirmation to this post. COVID-19 has highlighted the urgent need to address climate change and air pollution in order to save black and brown lives.

Mr. Pendley’s extreme views and discriminatory practices are alarming. As a nation we should be working to dismantle institutional racism, not making efforts to advance racist sentiments and actions. Mr. Pendley’s own words and actions make him unsuited to manage the BLM or attend to its mission.

We ask that you remove Mr. Pendley from his position at BLM. He is clearly unfit to lead the BLM or any federal agency.

Sincerely,

Bishop E. Gardin, Jr, Elizabeth Missionary Baptist, Monroe  
Dr. Abdue Knox, Greater Bethel AME, Charlotte  
Dr. Albert Lee, Ebenezer Baptist, Wilmington  
Dr. Benjamin Hinton, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Gastonia  
Dr. Billy Casey, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, Oakboro  
Dr. Carl Brinkley, Jr., Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Fayetteville  
Dr. Carozell Henry, Crystal Spring, Leland  
Dr. Cathy Jones, Parkwood Institutional CME, Charlotte  
Dr. Claude R. Alexander, Jr., University Park Baptist Church/ The Park Church, Charlotte  
Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Sr., Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Charlotte  
Dr. Clifton Harris, Jr, Prince Chapel CME, New Hill  
Dr. Dennis Leach, Morning Star Baptist Church, Winston-Salem  
Dr. Gregory Busby, McClintock Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Dr. Jamaal Edwards, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Forest City  
Dr. James F. Linville, Piney Grove Baptist Church, Winston-Salem  
Dr. Jerry Cannon, C.N. Jenkins Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Dr. Joe L. Stevenson, Macedonia New Life Church, Raleigh  
Dr. John D. Fuller, Sr., Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Fayetteville  
Dr. Kendall D. Jones, Sr., New Bethel Baptist Church, Winston-Salem  
Dr. Larry Hill, Woodland Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Dr. Leonard Frieson, Sr., Brookston Missionary Baptist Church, Henderson  
Dr. Leonzo D. Lynch, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Charlotte  
Dr. Louis Hackett, Garland First Baptist, Garland  
Dr. M. L. Kaufman, Nicey Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Wingate  
Dr. Michael A. Stevens, Sr., City Church COGIC, Huntersville  
Dr. Michael Robinson, The Fellowship Mission, Charlotte  
Dr. Nilous Avery, II, General Baptist State Convention of NC, Inc., Raleigh  
Dr. Osco E. Gardin, Jr., Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church, Monroe  
Dr. Ricky A. Woods, First Baptist Church - West, Charlotte

Dr. Ricky L. Banks, St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church, Elizabeth City  
Dr. Roosevelt Baxter, Jr., Mount Calvary #2 Baptist, Wilmington  
Dr. Sandra Gripper, Faith CME, Charlotte  
Dr. Theodore Armstrong IV, Springfield Memorial Baptist Church, Stanley  
Dr. Timothy R. Williams, Yadkin Star Baptist Church, Lexington  
Dr. William Pegues, Reid Memorial CME, Greensboro  
Elder Christopher A. Stone, Unity Worship Center COGIC, Burlington  
Elder Ernest A. Perry, Beth'El Word COGIC, Jacksonville  
Elder James Tharrington, Successful Life Word Ministries International COGIC, High Point  
Elder James Tharrington, Evangel Reidsville COGIC, Reidsville  
Elder Jimmy Bention, Sr, Temple C.O.G.I.C, Rockingham  
Elder Ronald Roland, Chapel of Peace COGIC, Holly Ridge  
Elder Wil Nichols, Victorious Praise COGIC, Durham  
H. E. Edwards, Shiloh Baptist Church, Maxton  
Jimmie Gilchrist, Pee Dee Missionary Baptist Educational Association, Hamlet  
Johnny R. Pearson, Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, Greensboro  
Milton Butts, Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, Rocky Mount  
Pastor Allen Scott, Gethsemane Ministries COGIC, Raleigh  
Pastor Andreas Parsley, Decision Covenant COGIC, Cornelius  
Pastor Caesar Werts, Greater Redeemed COGIC, Winston-Salem  
Pastor Caesar Werts, Redeemed Fellowship Ministries COGIC, Winston-Salem  
Pastor Charles Washington, Regeneration Temple COGIC, Wake Forest  
Pastor Demetrius Samuel, Sr, Sherman Memorial C.O.G.I.C., Charlotte  
Pastor Earl McBride, Uplift Christian Center COGIC, Gibsonville  
Pastor Earnest Williams, Joshua's Generation Fellowship COGIC, Durham  
Pastor Gary Cypress, New Commission Fellowship COGIC, Havelock  
Pastor Harold Drumwright, Embrace Christian Center COGIC, Roxboro  
Pastor James Parker, The Pillar & Ground of Truth COGIC, Zebulon  
Pastor Jasen Grant, COGIC, Harrisburg  
Pastor John Lyon, House of Prayer COGIC, Roxboro  
Pastor Lawrence Roary, Resurrection Life Ministries COGIC, Charlotte  
Pastor Lorenzo Eldy, Faith Temple C.O.G.I.C., Wilmington  
Pastor Michael Roary, Providence Covenant COGIC, Charlotte  
Pastor Michael White, New Beginnings Christian Fellowship COGIC, Asheboro  
Pastor Michael Woodard, Grace Church COGIC, Wilson  
Pastor Myron Miller, Emmanuel Fellowship COGIC, Siler City  
Pastor Patrick Leake, Tree of Life Family Christian Center COGIC, Greensboro  
Pastor Ricky Alexander, God First COGIC, Burlington  
Pastor Robert Blackwell, New Hope COGIC, Maysville  
Pastor Robert Corbitt, Lighthouse Fellowship COGIC, Mebane  
Pastor Ronald Gates, Greater Works COGIC, Asheville  
Pastor Tyrone Pickett, Kingdom Connection COGIC, Burgaw  
Pastor Willard D. McNair, Vision of Unity Outreach Ministries COGIC, Asheboro  
Pastor William Cooper, Salt of the Earth COGIC, Burlington  
Re. Doris Gorham, Beebe Memorial CME, Washington  
Reverend Brenda Harrington, St Paul CME, Apex

Reverend Charles Kitrell, Rouse Chapel Baptist, LaGrange  
Reverend Delores Mingo, Thompson Chapel CME, Lexington  
Reverend Denny Chambers, St. Davie Baptist Church, Wingate  
Reverend John Cradle, St Joseph CME, Chapel Hill  
Reverend Keith Wooten, Staunton Memorial CME, Pittsboro  
Reverend Robert J. Williams, Jr, Williams Memorial CME, High Point  
Reverend Handy Gunter, Mt. Elam Baptist, Harrells  
Reverend Johnie Gorham, Shady Grove Baptist, Raeford  
Reverend Richardt Joyner, Sr, Hoopers Chapel Baptist, Leland  
Reverend Acie Robinson, Jr, First Baptist Deep Bottom, Wallace  
Reverend Advertus Hoff, Jr., Helton Community CME, Charlotte  
Reverend Alban Burney, Ebenezer Missionary Baptist, Wadesboro  
Reverend Albert Moses, Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Alexander Porter, Bethpage United Presbyterian, Concord  
Reverend Alfred Holston, Hayes Chapel Baptist, Rose Hill  
Reverend Alfred Jackson, Enoch Chapel Baptist, Wilmington  
Reverend Alic Mills-Henderson, St. James CME, Chocowinity  
Reverend Alvin Stafford, Allen Temple CME, Gaffney  
Reverend Amantha Barbee, Statesville Avenue Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Antonio Lawrence, Faith Presbyterian, Goldsboro  
Reverend Antonio Smith, Pleasant Hill Baptist, Ansonville  
Reverend Arbutus Hines, Stony Knoll CME, Spring  
Reverend Arrie Melvin , Russell Tabernacle CME, Springdale  
Reverend Arthur C. Canada, Southend Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Barry Gray, First Baptist Missionary Baptist Church, Siler City  
Reverend Ben Artis, Mount Calvary Baptist, Willard  
Reverend Benjamin Black, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Charlotte  
Reverend Benjamin Everett, Point Caswell Baptist, Atkinson  
Reverend Benjamin Thompson, Rosa Green Baptist, Currie  
Reverend Billy Holden, New Faith Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Brenda Faust, Pleasant Grove Baptist, Fleetwood  
Reverend Byron Wade, Davis Street Presbyterian, Raleigh  
Reverend Cameron Hankins, New Christian Chapel Church, Rose Hill  
Reverend Carl Moore, Lakes Chapel Baptist, Atkinson  
Reverend Carl Wanamaker, St. Luke CME, Tryon  
Reverend Carnell Stringfield, Christian Chapel no 1, Rose Hill  
Reverend Chad Armstrong, Phillips Chapel Missionary Bapt., Winston-Salem  
Reverend Chad R. Armstrong, Phillips Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Chauncey Robinson, White Plains Baptist, Sparta  
Reverend Cleveland Cunningham, Pleasant Hill CME, Hoffman  
Reverend Cleveland Graham, Mt Rena Baptist, Rocky Point  
Reverend Corey Weaver, St. Matthew Baptist, Rocky Point  
Reverend Curtis O. Donald, Mount Zion Baptist , Beaufort  
Reverend Damiko Faulkner, Ben Salem Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Danette Osbourne-Smart, Memorial Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Darrell Van Pelt, Davidson Presbyterian, Davidson

Reverend Daryl Young, Mt. Carmel Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend David Bracken, Rowan Baptist Association, High Point  
Reverend David Kelly, Island Creek Baptist, Rocky Point  
Reverend David Ruth, Bethany Presbyterian, Lumberton  
Reverend David William, Greater Gethsemane AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Deloris Perry, Erwin Temple CME, Cooleemee  
Reverend Dennie Leach, Sr, Morning Star Missionary Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Derrick Anderson, Soldiers Memorial AME Zion, Salisbury  
Reverend Dray Bland, First Baptist Church, Burlington  
Reverend Dwayne Walker, Little Rock AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Earnest Parish, Dothan Presbyterian, Maxton  
Reverend Eddie Deas, III, Third Street Presbyterian, Gastonia  
Reverend Eleanor Miller, New Zion CME, Rutherfordton  
Reverend Eric Joyner, Jr, New Vision of Faith Baptist, Navassa  
Reverend Eric Puryear, Christian Chapel no 1, Hampstead  
Reverend Eric Underwood, Shoulders Branch Baptist, Castle Hayne  
Reverend Floretta Watkins, Avenue Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Franklin Watkins, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Harrisburg  
Reverend Fred Goins, Ingram Branch, West End  
Reverend George Cook, Jr., Greater Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, Charlotte  
Reverend Giliston Morrisey, Snow Hill Baptist, Ivanhoe  
Reverend Gloria Bolden, St. Paul Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Gordon Griffin, Morres Creek Baptist, Currie  
Reverend Grady Fennell, Hawes Chapel Baptist, Garland  
Reverend Grady M. Sharps, O'Zion AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Gregory Davis, Bellefonte Presbyterian , Harrisburg  
Reverend Gregory Hewett, St. Lewis Baptist, Chinquapin  
Reverend Harold Bennett, Dulatown Presbyterian, Lenoir  
Reverend Harold Garner, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Liberty  
Reverend Haven Anderson, Marvin AME Zion, Waxhaw  
Reverend Henrico White, Weeping Mary AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Herbert L. Dickerson, Orange Grove Missionary Baptist, Durham  
Reverend Hubert Hill, Covenant Presbyterian, Kannapolis  
Reverend J. N. Coble, Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, Marshville  
Reverend Jacob B. Teasdell, Hanes Memorial CME, Winston-Salem  
Reverend James Belle, Haymount Presbyterian, Fayetteville  
Reverend James Eason, Mt Pisgah Baptist, Burgaw  
Reverend James Lea, Locust Grove Baptist, Brown Summit  
Reverend James Linville, Piney Grove Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend James Linville, Piney Grove Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend James Malloy, Mt Pilgrim Baptist, Wilmington  
Reverend James McKoy, Langford Chapel CME, Monroe  
Reverend James Shelton, Henderson Grove Presbyterian, Mint Hill  
Reverend James Thomas, Grier Heights Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend James Webster, First Baptist, Oak Ridge  
Reverend James Williams. Jr., Divine Faith Baptist Church, Rocky Mount

Reverend Jarvis Saner, New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church, Sherrills Ford  
Reverend Jeremy Buie, Mt. Zion Baptist, Riegelwood  
Reverend Jerome Lee, Jr, St James Missionary Baptist, Greensboro  
Reverend Jerry Christian, Jr, Russell Memorial CME, Durham  
Reverend Jimmy L. Thompson, Perkinsville Baptist , Burgaw  
Reverend Joe Jackson, Best Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Goldsboro  
Reverend Joel. D. Churchwell, Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church, Jacksonville  
Reverend John Burton, Emmanuel AME, Durham  
Reverend John Celghorn, Caldwell Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Johnny K. Miller, New Vernon Baptist Church, Bostic  
Reverend Johnny Searight, Jones Tabernacle CME, Lawndale  
Reverend Jonathan Augustine, St. Joseph AME, Durham  
Reverend Joneice Carroll, Beebe-Chapel CME, Washington  
Reverend Jordan B. Boyd, Rockwell AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Joseph Clark, Providence Baptist , Leland  
Reverend Juilan Pridgen, St. Mark AME Zion, Durham  
Reverend Julian Couch, Jr., Faucette Memorial CME, Durham  
Reverend Karen Cozart, Rogers Chapel CME, Faquay-Varina  
Reverend keelan Atkinson, WORD Fellowship Baptist Church, Greensboro  
Reverend Kenneth James, Walls Memorial AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Kenneth Moore, Sharon Missionary Baptist, Stoneville  
Reverend Kenneth P. Sterling, First Presbyterian, Lillington  
Reverend Kenneth P. Sterling, Sprout Springs Memorial Presbyterian, Cameron  
Reverend Kevin Allen, Betholite Baptist, Magnolia  
Reverend Larry Green, Union Baptist Church, Wallace  
Reverend Latonia Thomas, Bethlehem Baptist, Winnabow  
Reverend Laura Wilson, Roberts Tabernacle CME, Shelby  
Reverend Leon Ogelsby, Westside Missionary Baptist, Robbins  
Reverend Lorenza Small, Sr, First United Presbyterian , Charlotte  
Reverend Lorenzo Lynch, Jr, Ebenezer Missionary Baptist, Charlotte  
Reverend Marion Robinson, St Matthew AME, Raleigh  
Reverend Mark Evans, Jonahville AME Zion, Huntersville  
Reverend Matthew Rouse, Piney Grove East Missionary Baptist Church, Wingate  
Reverend Maurice Barnes, White Rock Presbyterian, Kinston  
Reverend Michael A. Glenn, catawba View Missionary Baptist Church, Belmont  
Reverend Michael F. Weeks, Jones Chapel Missionary Baptist, Reidsville  
Reverend Michael Maddox, Mt Sinai Baptist, Wallace  
Reverend Michael Marsh, Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Waxhaw  
Reverend Michael McLean, East Stonewall AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Milton Edwards, Logan Chapel CME, Charlotte  
Reverend MiltonB. Edwards, Young Laymen Temple CME, Greenville  
Reverend Mitchell Stewart, Mt. Zion CME, Salisbury  
Reverend Monte W. Brown, Steel Creek AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Nathaniel P.J. Williams, Jr, Christ Temple CME, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Nilous M. Avery, II, Mount Zion Baptist , Salisbury  
Reverend Olen Bruner, Trinty Presbyterian, Salisbury

Reverend Omotokum Omokunde, Timothy Darling Presbyterian, Oxford  
Reverend Patrica Ann Bacon, Calvary Presbyterian, Asheville  
Reverend Perry Melvin, First Baptist, Steadman  
Reverend Phyllis C. Rhone, Guilford Chapel CME, Middlesex  
Reverend Quientrell L. Burrell, Jr., First Baptist Church of Weldon, Weldon  
Reverend Reginald Tuggle, New Friendship Presbyterian, Huntersville  
Reverend Reginald Wells, Falling Run Baptist, Fayetteville  
Reverend Rickie Houston, Pilgrim Rest Baptist, Wilmington  
Reverend Rico Newkirk, First Baptist Charity, Ross Hill  
Reverend Robert Johnson, Ebenezer Presbyterian, New Bern  
Reverend Robert L. Hodges, Sr, St. Paul AME, Raleigh  
Reverend Robert McGowens, Sr, Greater Galilee Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Rogers Randall, Calvary Presbyterian, Wilson  
Reverend Ronald A. Sullivan, Catawba View Missionary Baptist Church, Old Fort  
Reverend Ronald Speas, New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Ronald Speas, New Jerusalem Missionary Bapt., Winston-Salem  
Reverend Ronald White, Sr., Young Missionary Temple CME, Raleigh  
Reverend Roy Holmes, Canetuck Baptist, Currie  
Reverend S. Franklin Russell, Myers Tabernacle AME Zion, Charlotte  
Reverend Sandra Kaye Barrow- Ziglar, Logan Presbyterian, Scotts  
Reverend Sheila Council, New Hampton Presbyterian, Charlotte  
Reverend Silas Hart, Cox's Grove Baptist, Crumpler  
Reverend Solomon Missouri, Kyles Temple AME Zion, Durham  
Reverend Stephen Glenn, Shouse Temple CME, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Terrance Evans, Canaan Missionary Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Terry Henry, Macedonia Baptist, Wilmington  
Reverend Terry Little, Zion Missionary Baptist Association, Marshville  
Reverend Theodore Armstrong, Jr., Springfield Memorial Baptist Church, Stanley  
Reverend Theodore Thomas, First Missionary Baptist, Warsaw  
Reverend Timothy Bates, Calvary Presbyterian, Statesville  
Reverend Timothy Bates, Cameron Presbyterian, Statesville  
Reverend Timothy Tate, Blacks Memorial Presbyterian, Monroe  
Reverend Tommy Carpenter, Third Creek Missionary Baptist Church, Stony Point  
Reverend Valarie Everett, St. John CME, Winston-Salem  
Reverend Venessa Hughes, Hamlet Chapel CME, Pittsboro  
Reverend Verl Brown, Macedonia Baptist, Sparta  
Reverend Warren Nance, Ebenezer Presbyterian, Morven  
Reverend Waymon Monroe, Solid Rock Missionary Baptist, Winston-Salem  
Reverend William Mosley, New Horizon CME, Raleigh  
Reverend William Newkirk, Oak City Baptist, Raleigh  
Reverend William Raynor, First Baptist Rose Hill, Rose Hill  
Reverend William Scott, Piney Ridge CME, Mills  
Reverend William Smith, Newkirk Chapel Church, Willard  
Reverend Alex Turner, Belview Baptist, Haw River  
Reverend Brian Monroe, First Baptist, Southport  
Reverend Carlton A.G. Eversley, Dellabrook Presbyterian, Winston-Salem

Reverend Edward Barnhill, First Baptist, Teachey

Reverend Harvey Robinson, Keathern Chapel Baptist, Harrells

Reverend Keelan Akinson, Word Fellowship Baptist Church, Jamestown

Reverend Timothy Davis, New Jerusalem Baptist, Wilmington