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 saves 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 action 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 Amamtha 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 Baptist, 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 Morrissey, 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, Dulatont 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 Julian 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. Pisgh Baptist Church, Waxhaw
Reverend Michael McLean, East Stonewall AME Zion, Charlotte
Reverend Milton Edwards, Logan Chapel CME, Charlotte
Reverend Milton B. 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, Trinity Presbyterian, Salisbury
Reverend Omotokum Omokunde, Timothy Darling Presbyterian, Oxford
Reverend Patricia Ann Bacon, Calvary Presbyterian, Asheville
Reverend Perry Melvin, First Baptist, Steadman
Reverend Phyllis C. Rhone, Guilford Chapel CME, Middlesex
Reverend Quintrell 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 Terrance Evans, Canaan Missionary Baptist, Winston-Salem
Reverend Terrance Evans, New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem
Reverend Terrance Evans, Young Missionary Temple CME, Raleigh
Reverend Brian Monroe, First Baptist, Southport
Reverend Carlton A.G. Eversley, Dellabrook Presbyterian, Winston-Salem
Reverend Carlyle Everett, St. John CME, Winston-Salem
Reverend C. Hughes, Hamlet Chapel CME, Pittsboro
Reverend C. Brown, Macedonia Baptist, Sparta
Reverend Carl Eversley, 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 Alex Turner, First Baptist, Southport
Reverend Alex Turner, Dellabrook Presbyterian, Winston-Salem
Reverend Edward Barnhill, First Baptist, Teachey
Reverend Harvey Robinson, Keatern Chapel Baptist, Harrells
Reverend Keelan Akinson, Word Fellowship Baptist Church, Jamestown
Reverend Timothy Davis, New Jerusalem Baptist, Wilmington