

US Department of Interior's Plan to Destroy Public Records Is "Unacceptable"

Interior's request for permission to destroy certain records comes as Zinke's department has failed at transparency

By [Common Dreams](#)

Global Research, November 27, 2018

[Common Dreams](#) 26 November 2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

Today, Western Values Project (WVP) submitted a formal [comment](#) to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requesting that they not grant the US Interior Department's request to delete public records. Interior's request comes as the department and Secretary Zinke have dragged their feet responding to and in some cases simply failed to provide responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Today is the last day for the public to submit [comments](#) to NARA on Interior's request.

Interior is [seeking permission](#) from NARA to permanently destroy a range of records relating to oil and gas leases sales, legal matters, mineral exploration permits, and fish and wildlife surveys, among other issues. WVP's comment asserts that extensive record keeping is essential to holding Interior accountable by ensuring they are doing the public's work properly and legally.

"This is pretty rich coming from someone who claimed he would run the most transparent Interior Department in his lifetime. But as Ryan Zinke's future remains in question, we are not surprised by his attempt to rewrite history," said Chris Saeger, Executive Director of Western Values Project. "It's unacceptable that Interior is already turning their efforts to destroying documents when they can't even respond to the public records requests they have coming in. Despite his claims to the contrary, Zinke is trying yet again to pull wool over the eyes of the American people by keeping the public in the dark while his department wages attacks on public lands and wildlife."

WVP's comment points out that since the beginning of the Trump administration, Secretary Zinke's Interior Department has only fulfilled 10.53 percent of FOIA requests that WVP submitted. 132 FOIA requests that WVP has submitted to Interior are still outstanding, including FOIA requests that are 18 months old, dating all the way to May 2017.

The unfulfilled requests have forced WVP to sue the department, with [multiple lawsuits](#) still ongoing.

Earlier this year, Interior accidentally [released](#) thousands of pages in response to a FOIA request that were supposed to be redacted: the accidentally-revealed documents showed that as Zinke conducted his national monuments review, his staff "rejected material that would justify keeping protections in place" and instead looked for evidence that supported rolling back public lands protections.

Zinke has also kept the public in the dark by [using](#) a secret calendar and releasing incredibly vague calendars to the public.

Read Western Values Project's full email to NARA [here](#).

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

The original source of this article is [Common Dreams](#)
Copyright © [Common Dreams](#), [Common Dreams](#), 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Common Dreams](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca