March 3, 2021

Chairman Joe Manchin  
Ranking Member John Barrasso  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

We write to you as recipients of the Goldman Environmental Prize in support of the nomination of Representative Deb Haaland as U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The confirmation of Representative Haaland would send a message of hope and support from the United States government to indigenous peoples in the US and around the world whose lives and traditional ways of life are increasingly under threat.

Indigenous peoples face a global crisis of violence, poverty and criminalization, conditions that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has ravaged many indigenous communities that lack access to appropriate protection measures and medical care. As an indigenous person herself, Representative Haaland has a deep understanding of these issues and will work tirelessly to ensure that the United States government acts to improve the living conditions of its indigenous population and will contribute constructively to global efforts to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Berta Caceres, an indigenous land rights activist from Honduras and our fellow Goldman Prize awardee. Berta was brutally murdered by individuals intent on silencing her activism in defense of indigenous peoples. The confirmation of Representative Haaland would honor Berta’s legacy and be an important signal to those, like the individuals who killed Berta, that the US government stands on the side of protecting and defending indigenous rights.

As defenders of the earth and our global environment, we believe we must urgently come together as a human family to address the threats facing our common humanity. We believe we can find ways forward that will ensure sustainable and equitable management of our natural resources for the benefit of all, that save our planet for our children and future generations, and that protect the rights of those most vulnerable, in particular indigenous peoples. We believe Representative Haaland is the right person to help the US Government contribute constructively to finding these solutions.

We respectfully urge you to confirm Representative Haaland as U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

Ka Hsaw Wa, United States/Myanmar, 1999 Goldman Prize Awardee  
Yuyub Ismawati, Cambodia, 2009 Goldman Prize Awardee  
Bobby Peek, South Africa, 1998 Goldman Prize Awardee  
Anna Giurdano, Italy, 1998 Goldman Prize Awardee  
Feliciano Dos Santos, Africa, 2008 Goldman Prize Awardee
Tarcisio Feitosa, Mexico, 2006 Goldman Prize Awardee
Ikal Angelei, Africa, 2012 Goldman Prize Awardee
Craig Williams, North America, 2006 Goldman Prize Awardee
Bruno Van Peteghem, New Caledonia, 2001 Goldman Prize Awardee
Christine Jean, Europe, 1992 Goldman Prize Awardee
Desmond D’sa, Africa, 2014 Goldman Prize Awardee
Paul Sein Twa, Asia/Myanmar, 2020 Goldman Prize Awardee
Heffa Schucking, Europe, 1994 Goldman Prize Awardee
Ramesh Agrawal, India, 2014, Goldman Prize Awardee
Svet Zabelin, Russia, 1993 Goldman Prize Awardee
Nat Quansah, Madagascar, 2000 Goldman Prize Awardee