



Stop the Coup 2025
a public education and mobilization campaign

Chapter 16. Department of the Interior. Author: William Perry Pendley, former senior official in the Ronald Reagan administration; leader, Bureau of Land Management for President Trump.

The mission of the Department of the Interior (DOI) is to oversee, manage, and protect the nation’s natural resources and cultural heritage; provide information about those resources; and honor the nation’s trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

The DOI is responsible for more than 500 million acres of federal lands, including national parks and national wildlife refuges; 700 million acres of sub-surface minerals; 1.7 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS); 23 percent of the nation’s energy; water in 17 western states; and trust responsibilities for 566 Indian tribes and Alaska Natives. Here, Pendley argues that President Biden is “at war” with the department’s mission. The Biden administration, states Pendley, has been illegally prioritizing conservation rather than supporting economic development for those who wish to employ multi-use federal lands.

As stressed in Chapters 12 and 13, Conservatives are concerned with the US’s global energy dominance or independence. Pendley argues that, under Trump, the US achieved “energy security.” Thus a new conservative administration should immediately reverse specific Biden policies in order to encourage fracking and more drilling for oil (primarily in Alaska).

Notes Pendley: “Given the dire adverse national impact of Biden’s war on fossil fuels, no other initiative is as important for the DOI under a conservative President than the restoration of the department’s historic role managing the nation’s vast storehouse of hydrocarbons, much of which is yet to be discovered.” Biden’s “war on fossil fuels,” Pendley asserts, harms the US economy, which depends on cheap energy for economic development. More power must be given to states and Indian tribes to make decisions about energy production, he states.

Pendley argues that the effect of the Biden administration’s policies has particularly affected two areas: the Western states, where the control of water and the use of federal lands for grazing are particularly important issues; and Alaska, where oil drilling on land held by Alaska Natives has been particularly contentious.

Other specific recommendations include:

- ✓ Stop using the Endangered Species Act to control the use of federal land (e.g. “de-list” the grizzly bear, the spotted owl, and the sage grouse)
- ✓ Stop illegally using National Monument Designations to close federal land to multiple uses
- ✓ Specifically allow Indian tribes to “develop their abundant oil and gas resources”
- ✓ Stop artificially boosting the demand for electric vehicles

Pendley states that Biden administration policies have had especially deleterious effects on Native Americans. He points to, for example, Biden’s failure to secure the border, thereby robbing “Indian nations on or near the Mexican border of safe and secure communities, while permitting them to be swamped by a tide of illegal drugs, particularly fentanyl.”

STC 2025 Commentary: Chapter 16 describes what conservatives see as an epic conflict between “environmental extremists” and those who want to make federal land more “productive” by promoting coal mining, mineral extraction, and drilling for oil and gas. As other conservatives argue, Pendley pushes for states to control the use of federal lands to support local economic development, which is prioritized over conservation.

Chapter 16 - Key Points:

- ✓ Reverse Biden policies to achieve ‘energy security’ by allowing more fracking and drilling for oil and gas, especially in Alaska
- ✓ Give states and Indian tribes more power to decide about energy production and land use
- ✓ Stop supporting the use of electric vehicles
- ✓ Keep federal land open for grazing