

## BLM

### Watchdog decries wearable 'vision cards' as propaganda

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The Bureau of Land Management has circulated "vision cards" that employees can wear, outlining the agency's commitment to "the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources," and including images of an oil rig and cattle ranchers.

The government watchdog group **Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility**, or PEER, circulated the vision cards today to news media outlets.



These vision cards are being handed out to Bureau of Land Management employees. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

E&E News confirmed with BLM and another Interior source that the cards had been given to employees.

Featuring artwork by BLM employees of ranchers and an oil rig, the cards "were created and sent out several months ago by the Washington office" to agency employees, Michelle Barret, a BLM spokeswoman, said in an email.

But Barret insisted that "no one was ordered to wear them by anyone at headquarters. If supervisors told employees that they must wear them, they were mistaken."

The goal of the vision cards, she added, "is exactly as what you think — just our day-to-day vision, not unlike many organizations' crafted vision statements."

But the emphasis on the agency's "multiple-use mission" — including "guiding principles" emphasizing the drive to "improve the health and productivity of the land," and "deliver better service to our customers" — underscores the Trump administration's goals of increasing domestic energy production and striving to make BLM a "better neighbor" in communities out West.

It also breaks somewhat from the Obama administration's perceived emphasis on conservation over other uses of public lands.

An Interior Department source who asked not to be identified said that in addition to the "vision cards" meant to be worn by BLM employees, similar-looking "business cards" also were handed out to employees.

The source said the business cards are "sort of silly" but said no one is being forced to use them.

The agency vision statement on the cards, as well as statements of values and guiding principles on the cards, are also on BLM's website.

But PEER today blasted the vision cards, saying BLM employees are under orders to wear them "on their uniforms."

"The person of federal employees should not be used for political messaging," PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch said in a statement.

Ruch likened the vision cards to propaganda placards used by totalitarian regimes. "This is supposed to be the Bureau of Land Management, not Mao's Red Guard," he said.

He added, "These mandatory Vision Cards are both hokey and designed to reduce public servants to walking talking points."

But Barret again denied that's the goal or that the cards are mandatory.

"In essence, the intent is to encourage employees to be aware of agency values," she said in her email.

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