

David Bernhardt

Secretary, Department of the Interior
Ex-Officio Director
WASHINGTON, DC

David Bernhardt serves as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

As Secretary of the Interior, Bernhardt leads an agency with more than 70,000 employees who are stewards for 20 percent of the nation's lands, including national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges and other public lands. The department oversees the responsible development of conventional and renewable energy supplies on public lands and waters; is the largest supplier and manager of water in the 17 Western states; and upholds trust responsibilities to the 567 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives.



Bernhardt is an avid hunter and angler and recently served on the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has in-depth experience in legal matters concerning active regulations and rule-makings, with years of legal experience in both the government and the private sector. His expertise ranges from the Endangered Species Act to Outer-Continental leases, from mining royalties to Indian Affairs.

From 2001 and 2009, he held several positions within the Department of the Interior, including serving as Solicitor. In that capacity, he led the International Boundary Commission between the United States and Canada and was responsible, along with his Canadian counterpart, for maintaining the 5,525 mile international boundary between these two nations. Prior to that, he served then-Secretary Norton as a deputy solicitor, deputy chief of staff and counselor to the Secretary, and as director of Congressional and Legislative affairs and counselor to the Secretary.

A native of Rifle, Colorado, Bernhardt earned a B.A. in political science with a minor in business administration from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley in 1990. He graduated with honors from the George Washington University National Law Center in 1994 and is admitted to various state and federal court bars. He is married to Gena Bernhardt. They have two children and reside in Arlington, Virginia.