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From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Durbin lifts some Interior holds after Zinke meeting

By Anthony Adragna

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Senate Minority Whip [Dick Durbin](#) told reporters today he's lifting holds on two Interior nominees after a meeting Tuesday in which Secretary Ryan Zinke walked five senators through his decisions on national monument designations.

"He went through his reasoning on each one of them," Durbin (D-Ill.) said. "I thought it was terrible reasoning on Bears Ears." He didn't offer further details.

Also attending the meeting with Zinke were Democratic Sens. [Catherine Cortez Masto](#) of Nevada, [Martin Heinrich](#) of New Mexico, [Jeff Merkley](#) of Oregon and [Tom Udall](#) of New Mexico, according to Durbin.

A spokesman clarified Durbin lifted his hold on Joseph Balash's nomination to be assistant secretary for land and minerals management and would also lift his hold this afternoon on Brenda Burman to lead Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

Durbin and Zinke got into a [war of letters](#) last week over holds on two additional nominees besides Balash and Burman: Ryan Nelson to be agency solicitor and Susan Combs to be Interior's assistant secretary for policy, management and budget.

WHAT'S NEXT: Lifting the holds could clear the way for fast floor consideration of Balash and Burman.

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