

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

We write to ask for your support for continuing the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing prohibition for the greater sage-grouse, a provision that has been enacted in annual spending bills since fiscal year 2015 and is included in the Senate's Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill for fiscal year 2021. State-led conservation of the species is working, and the Fish and Wildlife Service has signaled no intent or need to list the species in 2021. Continuing the provision for another year therefore does no harm to the species while saving taxpayers from expensive litigation and freeing up limited appropriations for truly endangered species.

Species conservation is of the utmost importance in the West, and the commitment shown to conserving greater sage-grouse is certainly no exception. The 11 western states with sage-grouse habitat have individually implemented collaborative, science-based conservation plans tailored to address the specific issues of their individual landscapes. These conservation strategies were created with extensive input from diverse stakeholders including scientists, conservationists, previous Administrations, and local industry leaders.

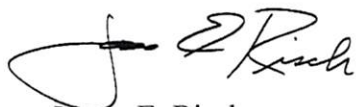
However, despite this scientific and collaborative approach, the greater sage-grouse has been embroiled in a cycle of litigation and listing determinations for decades. The threat of litigation undermines the collaborative process started by the Obama Administration in 2011. With as many as three listing considerations within a ten-year period, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently found State-led strategies to be successful in avoiding the need to list the species. Despite this, conservation efforts have also faced top-down Federal directives that completely disregard local land management expertise and communities. Meanwhile, time and resources that could have been spent working on conservation have been wasted in lawsuits and bureaucracy. Some have argued that a potential listing keeps the pressure on conservation efforts, yet every year that the provision has been incorporated in the bill, funding for sage-

grouse conservation has increased because of the commitment and partnerships of Federal, State, and local leaders.

Species conservation is a slow process, and this prohibition gives the state conservation plans time to be effectively implemented and show results. It also provides for on-the-ground decision-making and multiple land uses that communities have come to rely on. Instead of allowing the greater sage-grouse to be another victim of the activism industry that has been built around ESA-related litigation, we want to conserve the species. Using the knowledge and personal buy-in from States and local communities that have invested years in the development and implementation of these plans is the best way to do so.

The continuation of the prohibition against ESA listing for the greater sage-grouse is crucial not only for preserving ongoing State-Federal collaboration, but also for the long-term survival of the species. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Mike Simpson
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Crapo
Mike Crapo
United States Senator

/s/ Russ Fulcher
Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress

/s/ Kevin Cramer
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

/s/ Rob Bishop
Rob Bishop
Member of Congress

/s/ John Barrasso, M.D.
John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator

/s/ Bruce Westerman
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

/s/ Steve Daines
Steve Daines
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Lamborn
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

/s/ Michael B. Enzi
Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator

/s/ Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

/s/ John Hoeven
John Hoeven
United States Senator

/s/ Doug LaMalfa
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress

/s/ Michael S. Lee
Michael S. Lee
United States Senator

/s/ Dan Newhouse
Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress

/s/ Mitt Romney
Mitt Romney
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Stewart
Chris Stewart
Member of Congress

/s/ K. Michael Conaway
K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress

/s/ Tom Tiffany
Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress

/s/ Liz Cheney
Liz Cheney
Member of Congress

/s/ Tom McClintock
Tom McClintock
Member of Congress

/s/ Greg Gianforte
Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress

/s/ James R. Baird
James R. Baird
Member of Congress

/s/ Louie Gohmert
Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

/s/ Paul Cook
Paul Cook
Member of Congress

/s/ Ken Buck
Ken Buck
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Amodei
Mark Amodei
Member of Congress

/s/ John Curtis
John Curtis
Member of Congress