

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 29, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
2007 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin crafting the Fiscal Year 2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we encourage the subcommittee to reject the Obama Administration's unilateral actions on the Greater Sage Grouse.

The Department of Interior under the Obama Administration found in 2015 that a listing of the Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was not warranted. However, the agency unilaterally chose to implement a de facto listing through overly restrictive Resource Management Plan (RMPs) Amendments and Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMPs) Amendments. These RMPs and LRMPs are in many cases more restrictive than a critical habitat designation would be under an ESA listing. These misguided amendments were not warranted and sought to prevent responsible mineral production and other activities across 11 Western states.

The Obama Administration also sought to withdraw 10 million acres of the bird's habitat from future mining activity. The Obama Administration's scheme to use the Sage Grouse as an excuse to shut down virtually all development on large swaths of public lands in the West, particularly oil, gas, and mineral development, has resulted in devastating impacts for local economies. These unlawful amendments are already having a negative impact on our nation's energy and natural resource independence.

To make matters worse, the Greater Sage Grouse is not endangered. The population is greater today than it has been in recent years thanks to the concerted efforts of several states that implemented at their own expense comprehensive Sage Grouse recovery plans. The Obama restrictions defy common sense. Further, they are inconsistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and Greater Sage Grouse conservation planning efforts at the state and local level.

Congress must act to prevent severe economic losses to the U.S. economy and to ensure military readiness on affected military ranges is not compromised.

Section 114 of the engrossed version of the FY 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill contained language which aimed to block this report.

Accordingly, we ask that you include language similar to the following again this fiscal year:

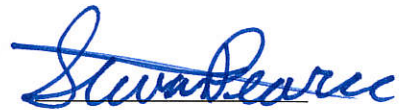
Sec. ____ . None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used—
(1) to determine whether the greater sage-grouse is an endangered species or a threatened species pursuant to section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); or
(2) to make or extend any withdrawal pursuant to section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1714) within any Sagebrush Focal Area published in the Federal Register on September 24, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 57635 et seq.).

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,



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



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



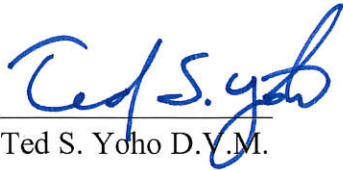
Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



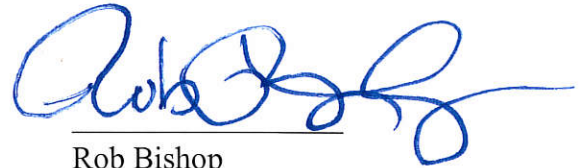
Ted S. Yoho D.V.M.
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop
Member of Congress