

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2016

The Honorable Neil Kornze
Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665
Washington DC 20240

Dear Director Kornze:

We request that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) revise the proposed "Planning 2.0" initiative and extend the public comment period by at least an additional 30 days, beyond the current 90 day comment period, to ensure local governments with limited financial and staffing resources have adequate time to fully digest and provide comment on the proposed Planning 2.0 Rule. The current 90 day comment period simply does not provide adequate time for local governments to analyze the substantial revisions to BLM's planning processes included in Planning 2.0.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) tasks the BLM to "...provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials, both elected and appointed, in the development of... land use regulations..." The requirement to provide meaningful public involvement of local governments is not a discretionary requirement. Simply providing public notice and comment alone does not achieve the required "meaningful public involvement" for local governments directed by FLPMA. Yet public notice and comment is all that has been provided.

While the BLM has provided a limited number of workshops to discuss Planning 2.0, the proposed regulations had already been drafted before the meetings occurred. We remain concerned that the BLM has not conducted adequate outreach to inform counties and local governments of the proposed changes. We believe that due to the complexity of the proposed changes the agency must hold public hearings in every state with BLM land before closing the public comment period. This will help to ensure that local governments fully understand what the BLM is proposing. If the Planning 2.0 initiative intends to make "landscape-scale" management decisions, then the same policy should apply to local outreach before any rulemaking is finalized.

Based on our initial analysis of the Planning 2.0 initiative, these are just a few of the immediate concerns we've identified as unclear and request immediate clarification.

With Planning 2.0's emphasis on expanded and earlier general public involvement, how does the BLM intend to preserve the significant role of cooperating agencies? Specifically, how will the BLM commit to ensuring that cooperating agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act will be able to participate in organizing planning processes and preparing analyses, per Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations found at 40 CFR 1501.6 and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, and not be limited only to providing comments later in the process?

As Planning 2.0 proposes to eliminate consistency requirements with local policies and programs, how does the BLM specifically plan to avoid marginalizing a large number of western communities who may not have the means to produce and maintain comprehensive land use plans? Why does BLM believe it is necessary to remove the definition of "consistent" from 43 CFR 1601.0-5 when the removal may make it unclear whether or not consistency review requirements have been met?

If BLM proposes to eliminate planning based on jurisdictional boundaries and instead devise Resource Management Plans (RMP) based on landscapes, which resources will be used to define planning areas? Will these be identified based on geography, mineral resources, ecological resources, or some combination? With an increased emphasis on Adaptive Management, is there a potential that rapid changes to RMPs will make it difficult to plan for and invest in certain uses, and if so, how will the BLM balance these two objectives? What is the anticipated effect on the development timeline and lifespan of an RMP under the proposed process?

We request you address these concerns with the highest level of consideration on behalf of our constituents.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Lummis
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
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Doug LaMalfa
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Walter Jones
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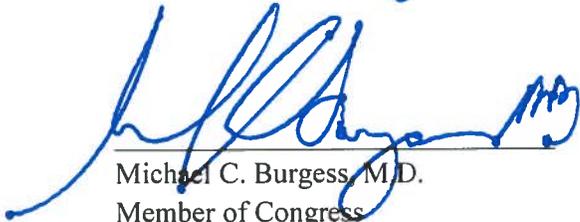
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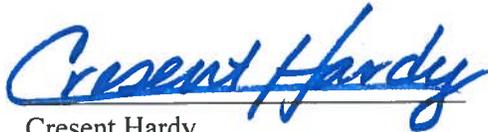
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