

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 4, 2014

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

The Honorable James P. Moran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member Moran:

Thank you for your efforts to appropriately balance limited resources in this difficult fiscal climate in order to maintain our obligation to responsibly manage our federally owned lands. We are writing to express support for sustained funding in the FY 2015 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to ensure that efforts by the Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies support state and local preservation efforts currently underway to conserve and recover Greater Sage-Grouse remain intact.

The Bureau of Land Management is the main federal agency responsible for leading a collaborative effort to protect and restore sage-grouse habitats and to rebuild their populations—since more than 50 percent of the grouse habitat is on BLM lands. This unprecedented initiative includes other federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and a broad array of non-federal entities including the Western Governors Association, western state wildlife agencies, tribes, local governments, and the public.

It will be difficult for the Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies to succeed in achieving this collaborative management effort without adequate resources. To that end, we respectfully request the subcommittee provide sustained funding that maintains activities that support state and local preservation and conservation efforts.

We are also writing to request that the following language be added to the FY 2015 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill stating:

“None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to add the Greater-Sage Grouse to the list of threatened species or endangered species published under section 4(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1553 (c)).”

The adoption of this language is designed to postpone the Department’s precipitous and impulsive march towards listing the Greater Sage-Grouse as a threatened or endangered species. Listing the Greater Sage-Grouse would directly impact land management, economies and

domestic energy supplies and production in western states while also disrupting effective species preservation efforts currently underway. It would not however, more effectively preserve the species.

Several western states have already embarked on range-wide efforts to protect the Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. Local governments and private landowners are using a variety of tools to protect the species, including: the implementation of protective land use policies, conservation easements on private land, Conservation Agreements with Assurances and private property acquisitions. These efforts and others have led to the expenditure of over \$130 million since 2000 in public and private funds, all with the goal of preserving the species. Thanks to these initiatives we've made great progress and ultimately these measures will achieve or exceed the species protection goals of a possible Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing.

This proposed language will afford local landowners and public officials the time necessary to protect the species and ensure economic growth.

We understand the difficulty you face in appropriating adequate resources for the programs under your discretion and thank you for your consideration of this request and your leadership on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress



Greg Walden  
Member of Congress



Joe Heck  
Member of Congress



Steve Daines  
Member of Congress