

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Secretary Zinke:

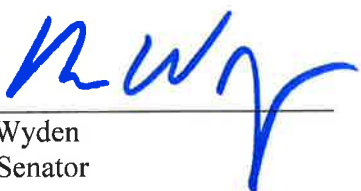
We write to request details on steps you are taking to ensure that conservation efforts for the Greater Sage-grouse continue across the West. During your nomination hearing, you agreed that federal and state agencies should work collaboratively with local stakeholders for successful sage grouse conservation, saying, “you have to reward getting together in collaboratives because it takes a lot of resources, it takes time, it takes effort.” We appreciate those words, and look forward to working with you to prevent an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing for the Greater Sage-grouse.

The Greater Sage-grouse has been in rapid decline; a decline that has signaled danger for over 350 other species that share the landscape. Over the last decade, federal agencies, states, and a broad coalition of groups came together to establish science-based conservation plans that protect sage grouse and their habitat. These historic collaborative efforts – never before seen in the West – helped the sage grouse avoid a listing under the ESA and serve as a model for future successful collaborative conservation. If adjustments to land use plans are necessary in the future, we would encourage you to work with the Sage-Grouse Task Force to find solutions, rather than abandon this collaborative effort.


An ESA listing for sage grouse would adversely affect land users across the West, creating regulatory uncertainty for ranchers, conservationists, sportsmen, and industry. This uncertainty threatens the longstanding principle of multiple use on public lands. Given the Department of the Interior’s important role implementing these conservation plans, please describe what actions your agency has taken, or intends to take, to ensure these plans are implemented effectively.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator