

Chairman Mac Thornberry
House Armed Services Committee
Washington DC 20515

Ranking Member Adam Smith
House Armed Services Committee
Washington DC 20515

April 26, 2016

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith,

On behalf of the undersigned sportsmen-conservation and resource professional organizations, we would like to express our opposition to the inclusion of any language in any legislation that seeks to delay, defund, or otherwise undo the greater sage-grouse federal conservation plans on millions of acres of national public lands.

The successful not-warranted decision by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in September 2015 came after years of coordination with the states, and that decision was fundamentally predicated on the strength of the federal conservation plans. Those plans do include mineral withdrawal, no-surface occupancy and other conservation measures in the best priority habitat – measures that are essential to the not-warranted decision and the long-term viability of sage-grouse. Importantly, the not-warranted decision also was heavily dependent on the full implementation of federal and state plans – without delay – and combined with voluntary efforts on private lands.

Success for the greater sage-grouse is defined as its continued management by the states. Because of the combination of strong conservation plans on federal public lands, coupled with state conservation plans and voluntary efforts from private landowners, states continue to manage sage grouse. Future management by the states depends heavily on immediate and consistent implementation of all these combined efforts. It is also important to note that more is at stake than the sage-grouse. The sagebrush ecosystem is home to more than 350 different species of plants and animals, including such iconic species as mule deer, pronghorn and elk. If we can continue to successfully conserve sage-grouse and sagebrush, we will help prevent a cascade of future listings that could seriously impact the western economy.

Our groups see no need for Congress to act on the sage-grouse beyond ensuring full funding for implementation of federal plans and funding for private lands conservation through the Farm Bill and other vehicles.

Sincerely,

Arizona

- Anglers United
- AZ Antelope Foundation
- AZ Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- AZ Bass Federation Nation
- AZ Big Game Super Raffle
- AZ Catfish Conservation Association
- AZ Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
- AZ Chapter Safari Club International

- AZ Council Trout Unlimited
- AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
- AZ Elk Society
- AZ Flycasters Club
- AZ Houndsmen
- AZ Outdoor Sports
- AZ Sportsmen for Conservation
- Coconino Sportsmen
- Mohave Sportsman Club
- Outdoor Experience 4 All

- The Bass Federation-AZ
- South East AZ Sportsmen Club
- SRT Outdoors
- Xtreme Predator Callers
- 1.2.3.Go...

California

- California Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Colorado

- Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- CO Chapter of the Muley Fanatic Foundation
- Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society

Idaho

- Ada County Fish and Game League
- Idaho Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Idaho Chapter of SCI
- Idaho Chukar Foundation
- Idaho Hunter Education Association
- Idaho Wildlife Federation

Montana

- Anaconda Sportsmen
- Central Montana Outdoors
- Gallatin Wildlife Association
- Hellgate Hunters and Anglers
- Laurel Rod and Gun Club
- Montana Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Montana Wildlife Federation
- Park County Rod and Gun Club
- Traditional Bowhunters of Montana

Nevada

- Nevada Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Reno
- Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Fallon

Oregon

- Oregon Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
- Oregon Division, Izaak Walton League of America
- Oregon Hunters Association
- Traditional Archery of Oregon

Utah

- Utah Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Washington

- Washington Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Wyoming

- Bowhunters of Wyoming
- Muley Fanatic Foundation
- Wyoming Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Wyoming Wildlife Federation