



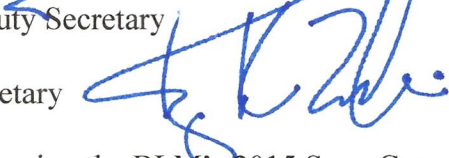
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

AUG 04 2017

Memorandum

To: Deputy Secretary

From: Secretary 

Subject: Improving the BLM's 2015 Sage-Grouse Plans

On June 7, 2017, I issued Secretary's Order 3353, "Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation and Cooperation with Western States" (Order). The Order was issued in response to concerns I have heard regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 2015 Greater Sage-Grouse (Sage-Grouse) Plans. The Department of the Interior (Department) Sage-Grouse Review Team has completed the "Report in Response to Secretarial Order 3353" (Report) outlining short- and long-term recommendations as directed in my Order.

I hereby direct you to ensure implementation of the recommendations and direct BLM, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and other offices in the Department, to immediately begin implementing the short- and long-term recommendations in the Report. As part of this effort, the BLM should collaborate with the Sage-Grouse Task Force to engage with stakeholders and to improve the compatibility of the 2015 Sage-Grouse Plans with the States,¹ beginning with these actions:

- Identify options to incorporate updated habitat boundaries into habitat management areas;
- Clarify mechanisms to modify waivers, exceptions, and modifications in priority habitat management areas (PHMAs);
- Modify or issue new policy on fluid mineral leasing and development, including the prioritization policy;
- Issue or modify policy and provide training on use of assessment and monitoring data and tools, the habitat objectives table from the 2015 Sage-Grouse Plans and to increase flexibility in grazing management;
- Identify options for flexibility when applying adaptive management decisions;
- Investigate options to streamline use authorizations with little impact on the 2015 Sage-Grouse Plans;
- Clarify the appropriate use of compensatory mitigation and identify opportunities to increase consistency between the Federal and State plans;
- Work with the States to improve techniques and methods to allow the States to set appropriate population objectives; and
- Investigate the removal or modification of Sage-Grouse Focal Areas in certain States.

¹The States are California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

I am particularly interested in assisting the States in setting Sage-Grouse population objectives to improve management of the species. I also believe we should examine a program to enhance scientific research. Please report to my office periodically, and no less than every 6 months, on the progress you have made in implementing the recommendations from the Report.