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December 12, 2024

Tracy Stone-Manning
Director, Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Stone-Manning,

On November 15th, 2024, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced its promulgation of its Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) regarding range wide planning for the Greater Sage Grouse (GRSG) population in the Western United States. I am writing to express my opposition to the FEIS, as outlined in BLM's recent revisions. These new regulations will have serious consequences for individual states and counties, and the nation as a whole.

This FEIS considers 77 BLM RMPs across the range of the GRSG and impacts both the BLM surface estate as well as BLM-administered subsurface mineral rights directly underlying nonfederal ownership. The FEIS would impose significant restrictions through exclusion areas on industries vital to Wyoming and other western states, including energy production, mining, and agriculture. Restricting development in designated areas that are already heavily regulated will unnecessarily stifle economic activity. The energy industry in Wyoming remains a national leader in oil, gas, and coal production—and the entire nation depends on us for reliable and affordable energy. This proposal will reduce productivity and threaten energy security across the country – and increase energy poverty in areas that are already vulnerable to blackouts as it imposes stricter environmental classifications through “priority habitat management areas” (PHMA), and several other designations that exclude appropriate activities on public lands.

The FEIS risks a substantial reduction in federal revenue from leasing and royalties. The energy sector is a significant contributor to the federal budget through these payments, but stricter land classifications, such as the 2,056,000 acres of PHMA's across the planning area, will lower the available acreage for leasing, thereby reducing federal income while increasing administrative costs. This is a loss not only for western states but for national taxpayers. Preventing surface occupancy for fluid minerals and right-of-way designations will result in a weakened energy grid and will not impact the GRSG population.

Recent findings on populations in Wyoming indicate a positive step taken towards the overall recovery of the GRSG. Lek counts (sites where male grouse display for mates) across the state increased by 15% in 2023, following a 12% rise in 2022. Specific regions, like the Southwest and Wind River/Sweetwater areas, saw even higher gains.

I urge the BLM to reconsider this proposal and work collaboratively with the states, local communities, and industries who will be negatively impacted by this RMPA and FEIS. The American people expect their government to take a more balanced approach when it comes to the conservation of species – as evidenced by the recent election in November – and the need to produce food, fiber and fuel. Imposing these draconian restrictions will not help the GRSB population but will have a devastating impact on our energy and food security and independence.

Sincerely,



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress