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October 16, 2023

The Honorable Tracey Stone-Manning
Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Stone-Manning,

In August, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO) introduced its Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision with its accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the RSFO planning area, which makes up 3.6 million acres of land. This Draft RMP is not only destructive to Wyoming's economy, and very far-reaching in its implications, but entirely outside of the scope of the BLM's authority. I therefore request that BLM immediately withdraw this RMP and start the process over.

The RMP contains four alternatives for the planning area, including Alternative A, which amounts to no action, the BLM's preferred Alternative B which would have tremendous negative consequences for the state, Alternative C, which severely restricts recreational activities, and Alternative D which restricts important mining and drilling activities in the region.

In total, under BLM's preferred alternative, about 2.5 million acres would not be available for new rights-of-way. This amount would be an increase of more than 480% in acreage off-limits to access, development and use, preventing the construction of such things as power lines, pipelines, and roads, while also prohibiting the maintenance of existing roadways and trails. Alternative D would also severely restrict trona mining, as well as oil and natural gas development— both of which are key contributors to the state's economy, with the latter being critical to national energy security.

According to the Wyoming Mining Association "there are significant quantities of leasable, locatable and salable minerals within the RMP area." The draft RMP, however, designates 1.8 million acres of the planning area as "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" (ACECs), essentially blocking almost all opportunities for economic development, particularly as it relates to energy production and mineral extraction. Such an outcome will severely hamper the state's ability to generate revenue for essential services, and even further restrict our ability to meet our national energy demands.

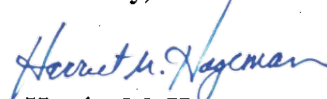
The preferred alternative threatens mineral development, grazing, recreational use, and essentially every activity that benefits the state of Wyoming and the nation as a whole. Wyoming Stock Growers Association has identified twenty-five specific changes from the RMP that will negatively impact ranching operations in the area, including changes made under "Social Impacts" of the plan that will invite judicial challenges from serial litigators who make their living off eliminating appropriate, necessary, and entirely legal uses of public land in the name of "conservation."

The BLM's preferred alternative also heavily impacts vehicle access. Despite the BLM's recent song and dance related to Alternative B's restrictions and prohibitions on vehicle use, it is clear that closing 4,505 miles of routes to all use, and the removal of another 10,000 miles of routes from the transportation network will result in diminished access, regardless of how the BLM would like to spin what is clearly set forth in the RMP itself. While the plan calls for limiting vehicles to "designated" roads across the landscape, it does not clarify what roads it will "designate" for travel.

The document includes all sorts of broad "protections" that are intentionally designed to severely curtail activity and access to huge swaths of our public lands. Among the most damaging of these so-called protections is the restriction of vehicles around "active" or "historic" nests of raptors. The RMP substantially broadens the definition of "raptors," including "hawks, owls, vultures, ravens, and eagles." The protection of "historic" nests is already too broad without including protections for "raven" nests—let alone protections for *historic* raven nests. The BLM simply does not have the authority to redefine terms in order to restrict our access to our lands.

The Rock Spring Draft RMP is entirely unbalanced. We have demonstrated for literally decades that we can mine, drill, and recreate on federal lands while also balancing for meeting the conservation needs of our important natural resources and wildlife. The preferred Alternative B and Alternative C do not strike the proper balance between conservation and development. Due to the significant impacts this proposal would have on the state of Wyoming, I ask that you withdraw the current proposed RMP and start over.

Sincerely,



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress