

# United States Senate

July 20, 2023

The Honorable Jeffrey Merkley  
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the  
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As you work to draft appropriations legislation, we write to urge your support for numerous priorities of the Senate Western Caucus, which represents 27 U.S. Senators from 15 different states west of the Mississippi River. We believe these policy areas play a vital role in maintaining the economic and environmental well-being of our region. As such, we respectfully request your consideration and support for the following matters.

**Block the BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Rule:** Earlier this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) noticed the proposed Conservation and Landscape Health rule, which represents a highly consequential alteration to federal land management. This proposal stands as one of the most significant changes to land management since the enactment of the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) in 1976. Rewriting the multiple-use mandate of our federal lands goes against both congressional intent and the will of those who work, recreate or live near federal lands. We strongly oppose the implementation of this ruling and urge you to prohibit the use of funds for the finalization and implementation of this proposal.

**Block the EPA's Clean Power Plan 2.0 Rule and the MATS Rule:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed a slate of rules that would force power plants to close, discourage new investments, increase costs for consumers and harm the reliability of our electric grid. Coming at a time when grid regulators, including members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, are issuing warnings about grid instability, the EPA's proposals will be harmful to the country. Additionally, these rules have dubious legal standing based on Supreme Court decisions and exceed congressionally delegated authority. We oppose the implementation of both proposed rules and request that you prohibit funding for finalization and implementation.

**Continue Prohibition on Greater Sage-Grouse Listing:** We support the continuation of prohibiting the listing of the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in any spending package. Since FY2015, this provision has continually been included in annual spending bills benefiting ranchers, farmers, recreationists and rural communities in western states. The economic well-being of these communities relies on the relies on responsible land management on the local level.

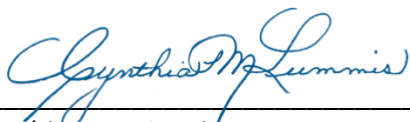
Enabling state and local communities to make informed decisions on the ground remains the most effective approach for conserving the greater sage-grouse and sustaining rural western communities. It is essential to uphold the continuation of the prohibition against listing the species under the Endangered Species Act to preserve local decision-making autonomy and ensure the survival of the sage-grouse.

**Wild Horse & Burro Management:** We support necessary efforts to reduce the overpopulation of wild horses and burros on federal land and encourage you to prioritize efforts that would allow the BLM to achieve this goal. Wild horse and burro populations double every four years. Without aggressive management, they will continue to degrade western rangeland and harm other wildlife population, as seen with the destruction of sagebrush with the greater sage-grouse.

**Wildfire Suppression and Prevention:** Forest fires are burning longer and hotter in large part due to the lack of active forest management. We urge you to prioritize efforts and accounts for wildfire suppression and forest management as well as adequate resources for the firefighting workforce. As the west is still experiencing drought conditions, it is imperative our land management agencies have the proper tools to fight wildfires.

As members of the Senate Western Caucus, we seek to promote and defend the western way of self-reliance, local decision-making and love of the land. We believe the most successful land management policies are collaborative in nature and take into full consideration those whose heritage and livelihoods are tied to our lands and resources. Those who are closest and depend the most on the land are best equipped to take on land management challenges. As such, we urge you to include the above policies in any future appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,



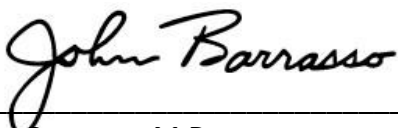
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Cynthia M. Lummis  
United States Senator  
Chair, Senate Western Caucus



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Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator  
Vice-Chair, Senate Western Caucus



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John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator  
Founder, Senate Western Caucus



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Steve Daines  
United States Senator  
Chairman Emeritus, Senate Western Caucus



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Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



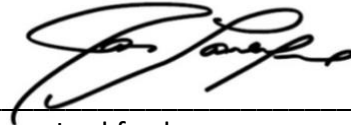
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Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



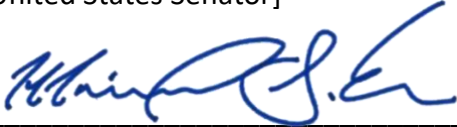
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Ted Cruz  
United States Senator]



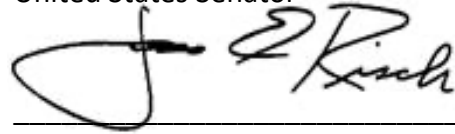
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James Lankford  
United States Senator



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Michael S. Lee  
United States Senator



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James E. Risch  
United States Senator



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M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator