Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

November 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell Majority Leader United States Senate 317 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer Minority Leader United States Senate 322 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Speaker United States House of Representatives 1236 Longworth H.O.B. Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy Minority Leader United States House of Representatives 2468 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

We write to ask for your support for continuing the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing prohibition for the greater sage-grouse, a provision that has been enacted in annual spending bills since fiscal year 2015 and is included in the Senate's Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill for fiscal year 2021. State-led conservation of the species is working, and the Fish and Wildlife Service has signaled no intent or need to list the species in 2021. Continuing the provision for another year therefore does no harm to the species while saving taxpayers from expensive litigation and freeing up limited appropriations for truly endangered species.

Species conservation is of the utmost importance in the West, and the commitment shown to conserving greater sage-grouse is certainly no exception. The 11 western states with sage-grouse habitat have individually implemented collaborative, science-based conservation plans tailored to address the specific issues of their individual landscapes. These conservation strategies were created with extensive input from diverse stakeholders including scientists, conservationists, previous Administrations, and local industry leaders.

However, despite this scientific and collaborative approach, the greater sage-grouse has been embroiled in a cycle of litigation and listing determinations for decades. The threat of litigation undermines the collaborative process started by the Obama Administration in 2011. With as many as three listing considerations within a ten-year period, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently found State-led strategies to be successful in avoiding the need to list the species. Despite this, conservation efforts have also faced top-down Federal directives that completely disregard local land management expertise and communities. Meanwhile, time and resources that could have been spent working on conservation have been wasted in lawsuits and bureaucracy. Some have argued that a potential listing keeps the pressure on conservation efforts, yet every year that the provision has been incorporated in the bill, funding for sage-

grouse conservation has increased because of the commitment and partnerships of Federal, State, and local leaders.

Species conservation is a slow process, and this prohibition gives the state conservation plans time to be effectively implemented and show results. It also provides for on-the-ground decision-making and multiple land uses that communities have come to rely on. Instead of allowing the greater sage-grouse to be another victim of the activism industry that has been built around ESA-related litigation, we want to conserve the species. Using the knowledge and personal buy-in from States and local communities that have invested years in the development and implementation of these plans is the best way to do so.

The continuation of the prohibition against ESA listing for the greater sage-grouse is crucial not only for preserving ongoing State-Federal collaboration, but also for the long-term survival of the species. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

James E. Risch

United States Senator

/s/ Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo

United States Senator

/s/ Kevin Cramer

Kevin Cramer

United States Senator

/s/ John Barrasso, M.D.

John Barrasso, M.D.

United States Senator

/s/ Steve Daines

Steve Daines

United States Senator

/s/ Michael B. Enzi

Michael B. Enzi

United States Senator

Mike Simpson

Member of Congress

/s/ Russ Fulcher

Russ Fulcher

Member of Congress

/s/ Rob Bishop

Rob Bishop

Member of Congress

/s/ Bruce Westerman

Bruce Westerman

Member of Congress

/s/ Doug Lamborn Doug Lamborn

Member of Congress

/s/ Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

Member of Congress

/s/ John Hoeven
John Hoeven
United States Senator

/s/ Michael S. Lee Michael S. Lee United States Senator

/s/ Mitt Romney Mitt Romney United States Senator

/s/ K. Michael Conaway K. Michael Conaway Member of Congress

/s/ Liz Cheney Liz Cheney Member of Congress

/s/ Greg Gianforte Greg Gianforte Member of Congress

/s/ Louie Gohmert Louie Gohmert Member of Congress

/s/ Ken Buck Ken Buck Member of Congress

/s/ John Curtis
John Curtis
Member of Congress

/s/ Doug LaMalfa Doug LaMalfa Member of Congress

/s/ Dan Newhouse Dan Newhouse Member of Congress

/s/ Chris Stewart Chris Stewart Member of Congress

/s/ Tom Tiffany Tom Tiffany Member of Congress

/s/ Tom McClintock Tom McClintock Member of Congress

/s/ James R. Baird James R. Baird Member of Congress

/s/ Paul Cook Paul Cook Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Amodei Mark Amodei Member of Congress