

24 January 2013

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We, the undersigned sportsmen's, conservation, and professional organizations, would like to express our gratitude for the work the Department of the Interior (DOI) has done to-date on sage-grouse conservation. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Sage-Grouse National Technical Team (NTT) report in 2011 titled "A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures" represents an important step towards integrating the best available science into more effective future management of sage-grouse on federal public lands.

We applaud the initiative DOI and BLM have taken to incorporate published research and guidance on sage-grouse found in scientific journals like *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Avian Biology*, and the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. The NTT report's endorsement of the 2000 "Guidelines to manage sage-grouse populations and their habitats" by J. W. Connelly, M. A. Schroeder, A. R. Sands, and C. E. Braun published in the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* is a positive move forward for BLM. These guidelines are based on decades of research and experience, and are designed to apply to most sagebrush habitat within current occupied habitat. By using the best available science to direct federal, state and local efforts for sage-grouse conservation, future BLM policy and management can ensure that sage-grouse are conserved on both private and public lands which may ensure viable populations that allow sustainable harvest and recreational opportunities for many generations.

We strongly recommend that BLM include management practices and protections identified by the NTT report, as well as incorporating recently published science, in the future Environmental Impact Statements being prepared to revise and amend appropriate Resource Management Plans across the range of greater sage-grouse. Failure to do so could undermine decisions regarding the fate of this species and its conservation. Thank you and we look forward to working with you to ensure a sustainable future for sage-grouse and their habitats throughout the West.

Respectfully,

Steven Riley, President and CEO
North American Grouse Partnership

Brian Murphy, CEO
Quality Deer Management Association

Winifred Kessler, President

The Wildlife Society

Whit Fosburgh, President and CEO

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Steve Williams, President

Wildlife Management Institute

cc: The Honorable Secretary Tom Vilsack, Dept of Agriculture
Director Daniel Ashe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Acting Deputy Director Neil Kornze, Bureau of Land Management
Michael Bean, Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks