

Chairman Lisa Murkowski
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
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February 9, 2017

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell,

The undersigned hunting, fishing, conservation, natural resource professional and outdoor-industry organizations represent millions of American sportsmen and women, and we are writing to express our support for the Bureau of Land Management's recently revised land-use planning rule, also known as Planning 2.0. The revised planning rule increases federal agency transparency and incorporates best practices in land-use planning, while maintaining the important cooperating agency role of state and local governments.

Stakeholders from across the multiple-use spectrum agreed that the previous BLM planning process could be improved. Under the outdated process, opportunities for public involvement were too few, and the public didn't learn about agency plans until they were already proposed.

With the new rule, the BLM provides three additional opportunities for cooperating agency and public involvement. These extra steps enable the BLM to gather public opinion and the best available information at the start of the planning process, then vet preliminary alternatives before issuing the draft resource management plan.

Further, the revised planning rule will identify important areas for fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation well in advance of plan development so that avoidance and minimization of impacts to these vital areas can be achieved as the agency plans for a range of uses of the land through individual plans. Given advancements in wildlife science and data collection since the previous planning rule was created more than 30 years ago, these updates were sorely needed, and the sporting and wildlife communities support this revision.

Finally, local, state, and tribal governments, including county commissioners, will retain their preexisting cooperating agency status and an elevated level of involvement in BLM land-use planning as specifically required by the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act. In fact, significant changes were made to the final planning rule in response to requests from cooperating agencies.

The new rule is the product of two and a half years of collaboration and is a productive step towards improving BLM planning. If additional improvements are necessary, the undersigned organizations are committed to working with the new Secretary of Interior, interested lawmakers and stakeholders to make such adjustments. However, Congressional actions to delay or dismiss the new BLM planning rule are unnecessary and counterproductive.

Sincerely,

American Fly Fishing Trade Association

Archery Trade Association

Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Hispanic Access Foundation

Izaak Walton League of America

Muley Fanatic Foundation

National Wildlife Federation

Oregon Hunters Association

Outdoor Industry Association

Pheasants Forever

Public Lands Foundation

Quail Forever

Snook and Gamefish Foundation

The Nature Conservancy

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

The Wildlife Society

Trout Unlimited

Wildlife Management Institute