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Linn D. Barrett
4305 29th Street Road
Greeley, CO 80634

Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO, 81506
ATTENTION: Greater Sage-Grouse EIS

November 26, 2013

Re: Greater Sage-Grouse EIS

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS. I realize that the Greater Sage-Grouse is an iconic and meaningful symbol of the American west.

I believe that in order to truly protect remaining sage grouse populations, dedicated sage grouse protection areas must be designated. I also believe these must be regions with high biological values for sage grouse, and regions which are closed to energy development. Therefore, I support Alternative B.

If, however, you move forward with Alternative D, which I understand is the BLM's preferred alternative, then I want construction of roads and transmission lines related to mineral leasing to be completed in a manner that minimizes and mitigates damage to sage grouse habitat and overall surface disturbance. In addition, I want to see routine aerial and satellite monitoring of all surface disturbances.

I realize that the management of greater sage grouse habitat throughout northwest Colorado will influence future management decisions across the country. Therefore I support Alternative B, which I believe best provides for the habitat needs of the Greater Sage-Grouse. Thank you.

With utmost conviction and sincerity,

Linn D. Barrett

Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Land Use Planning Amendments;

"COMMENTS" December 1, 2013

Northwest Colorado Greater Sage- Grouse LUPA and EIS Concerns

As an active land owner, cattle rancher, BLM grazing permitee, and sportsman, that resides in the area most affected by this proposed change in BLM range management practices. I am very concerned with the purposed changes listed in this document. It will have a very personal and economical effect on my ranching enterprise including not only my BLM allotment but also affecting my Private Property, and Private Lease Property that is used for grazing. **Alternatives, B,C and D** are far to radical and would be to costly to our cattle operation for it to continue as a cattle ranch. I find nothing in this document that will actually help the Sage Grouse, and I believe will cause the loss of the few Sage Grouse that remain.

Alternative A- No Action, should be the preferred Alternative and the only alternative I could support at this time. BLM should continue to work with the local land owners and conservation groups and develop a plan that uses sound, practical management practices with land owner participation to help the Sage Grouse. The decline in the Sage-Grouse population is a result of too many predators, including Man and not enough control of the overgrown decadent brush caused by the poor BLM policies of the last four decades.

Cheryl Johnson
11539 Co Rd. 5
Rifle Colorado 81650

Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Land Use Planning Amendments;

Piceance Creek Ranch
Dan Johnson
11539 Co. Rd. 5 Rifle, Colorado

"COMMENTS" December 1, 2013

Northwest Colorado Greater Sage- Grouse LUPA and EIS Concerns

As an active land owner, cattle rancher, BLM grazing permitee, and sportsman, that resides in the area most affected by this proposed change in BLM range management practices. I am very concerned with the purposed changes listed in this document. It will have a very personal and economical effect on my ranching enterprise including not only my BLM allotment but also affecting my Private Property, and Private Lease Property that is used for grazing. **Alternatives, B,C and D** are far to radical and would be to costly to our cattle operation for it to continue as a cattle ranch. I find nothing in this document that will actually help the Sage Grouse, and I believe will cause the loss of the few Sage Grouse that remain.

Alternative A- No Action, should be the preferred Alternative and the only alternative I could support at this time. BLM should continue to work with the local land owners and conservation groups and develop a plan that uses sound, practical management practices with land owner participation to help the Sage Grouse. The decline in the Sage-Grouse population is a result of to many predators, including Man and not enough control of the overgrown decadent brush caused by the poor BLM policies of the last four decades.

Dan Johnson

November 21, 2013

Erin Jones
Northwest Colorado Sub-Region Project Lead
BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I would like to submit the following as my comments on the Greater Sage Grouse Draft Land Use Plan Amendment and EIS:

The 5 percent disturbance cap within PPH habitat, included in the preferred alternative (and even worse, the 3% caps in alternatives B and C) are unreasonably strict, cover too much acreage, and will result in a loss of jobs and revenue for the counties of northwest Colorado. These disturbance caps will hinder all of our most crucial industries – energy, agriculture, recreation, mining – and stall economic recovery and development in our part of the state.

While the EIS describes how exemptions could be granted, it suggests that the studies to show the scientific basis behind granting them will have to be funded by the applicant. This should have been what this exercise was all about, to gather scientific data on the sage grouse and its habitat, and develop plans from there. Instead, faulty and incomplete reports were used, and now the onus will be placed on individual farms and businesses to spend resources to correct the EIS's shortcomings.

The 4 mile buffer zones assigned to the oil and gas industry for certain areas will further dissuade oil and gas exploration and development, and likely lead to more job losses, not to mention lost sub-surface revenue for local governments. As with the disturbance caps, this was not based on any clear data, and appears to be simply a punitive measure against the oil and gas industry.

In fact, the entire priority habitat designation process falls outside the bounds of supporting science. Other peer reviewed studies commissioned by Garfield County and others, show vastly different results, and far less land actually being supportive of the greater sage grouse.

There are many credible and accurate studies in existence that the BLM can and should consult before carrying on with economically dangerous plans for rural Colorado.

Sincerely,

Steven Reynolds
526 Pine Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

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October 22, 2013

BLM
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

RE: BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS

To all concerned parties,

The draft land use amendment and EIS contain elements which are simply unsupportable by the people of northwest Colorado. Every Alternative in this draft would, to one degree or another, cause irreparable harm to the most vital industries that make up the backbone of the entire region.

Based on what can only be described as dubious science, the BLM proposes to introduce anthropogenic disturbance caps over a very large part of north-west Colorado. These caps, whether the 3% called for in Alternatives B & C, or the 5% outlined in the Preferred Alternative, D, will directly and devastatingly impact virtually every industry that north-west Colorado relies on – agriculture, recreation, mining, oil and gas – as well as cost the region in terms of lost jobs, lost businesses, and lost revenue. What's more, these caps are not supported by data. What is the justification for the BLM to impose such onerous restrictions, if they cannot be backed up with solid science?

A large part of the problem with this EIS stems from the fact that the local governments were not consulted, and when they offered help, advice, research and suggestions, they were shot down and told to follow lock-step with the federal government's own flawed study.

This is a terribly important document, one which has the capacity to define the economic future of north-west Colorado for generations. It is the duty of the BLM to approach this effort in the most objective, un-biased manner possible. Unfortunately, that does not seem to have been the case here. A very clear bias against oil and gas development is evident throughout the document and appendices, including special stipulations on land use that apply only to fluid minerals. Like much of the EIS, these are not justified by any numbers or research.

The BLM could have saved a lot of time and headache if the agency would have just listened to the people closest to the source, and recognized the successful efforts that have already been undertaken at the local and state level to address the need. Please revisit this EIS, and include the local cooperating agencies as more than just a rubber stamp this time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Long
129 Larkspur Court
Silt, CO 81652

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October 22, 2013

TO: Erin Jones
Northwest Colorado Sub-Region Project Lead
BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Dear Ms. Jones,

This letter is to register my strong disapproval of the draft EIS concerning Greater Sage Grouse management in NW Colorado. None of the proposed alternatives are in any way viable for northwest Colorado. The stipulations included in the alternatives will severely impact many of our most important industries, including agriculture, oil and gas, and mining. Oil and gas development in particular was singled out in the preferred alternative for special restrictions with the imposition of NSO's around actual and potential sage grouse leks. All of our industries will suffer under the disturbance caps that will be levied if any of the alternatives are enacted. These caps are far too broad and excessive to be compatible with any sort of economic activity.

If the goal of the BLM is to bring the economy of northwest Colorado to a grinding halt, then this EIS accomplishes that. If it is to protect sage grouse habitat, while at the same time ensuring the continuation and responsible growth of a robust economy that relies on access to federal lands, then the document is an abject failure. What is most disappointing is that the local governments in the region were more than willing to offer their input and expertise to ensure that the required balance was attained, and yet were brushed off by your agency, and told that any input they wanted to contribute had to fall within the confines of a federal study which for all intents and purposes seemed predetermined.

I strongly urge the BLM to take another look at this EIS, this time including the unfiltered input of the cooperating agencies, who signed up for that because they have the most experience in balancing conservation and economic development, and also because they will be the most affected by the outcome of this process. Also, when re-doing the EIS, please ensure that all of the data used to formulate proposals and alternatives is properly reviewed and accurate.

I trust that your agency will do the right thing, and start this process over again.

Regards,

Jeff Odor
152 Current Drive
New Castle, CO 81647

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10/24/13

BLM Greater Sage Grouse EIS
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Attn: Erin Jones, Northwest Colorado Project Leader.

Dear Mrs. Jones:
I am opposed to the Action Alternatives laid out in this EIS, and correspondingly support the No-Action Alternative. There are several reasons for me to do so, but they mainly revolve around the fact that many of the provisions of the EIS are not supported by science, and that they are unjustifiably biased against oil and gas, and therefore against the economic well-being of the region in question.

The NTT study, on which the EIS is largely based, has apparently not been subject to the same level of rigorous scientific scrutiny that a project of this magnitude demands. It has arrived at conclusions that are not supported by other studies, and that are not backed up any place in the EIS or any of the supporting documents that I have found. It is essential that data being used to form the basis for a major regional land management effort are peer-reviewed, and examined for any flaw or oversight. Failure to do so reduces the entire effort to one of mere political agenda advancement.

This unfortunate observation is reinforced by the fact that oil and gas development is unfairly targeted in the document, most ostensibly by the imposition of No Surface occupancy "buffer zones" around sage grouse "leks". Like much of the rest of the recommendations sprung from the NTT report, this one has absolutely no basis in fact. Instead, it seems to be a punitive measure directed at an industry that not only provides hundreds of good jobs and a valuable product, but that has been on the leading edge of environmental protection.

The oil and gas industry have been good neighbors, good employers, and good stewards; please do not drive what remains of it away from the state for the sake of an incomplete and biased report.

Sincerely,

Shauna Davies

Shauna Davies
397 Evergreen Road
Grand Junction, CO 81501

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2013 NOV 29 PM 1:39

Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Oct 25/2013

RE: Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS

Dear BLM Staff:

I have a number of concerns about this draft EIS. My primary one is that the science used to justify the Priority Habitat designations, and the measures to be taken within them, does not appear adequate. The process surrounding how the NTT study was conducted, who did the work, and how it arrived at the conclusions it did was unclear at best, and many of us are left with questions surrounding the outcome. Was the process objective and fact-based? Was the data and process peer-reviewed? Or were the conclusions pre-determined and the study managed in such a way to ensure that its results matched the desired outcome?

With so many other studies offering differing accounts as to the extent of Greater Sage-grouse habitat, and the measures needed to preserve it, it is not unreasonable that many would be left wondering if the best available information was in fact used by your office in preparing this EIS.

The questions grow as one digs further into the details within the document itself. Not only are the habitat designations questionable, but so too are many of the proposals suggested in each alternative. For example, the need for a 4 mile no-surface-occupancy area extended around sage grouse leks, for fluid mineral operations, is not backed up by any data. In fact, the general antagonistic bias against oil and gas development in general is not backed up either. What evidence do you have that demonstrates that oil and gas development is a singular, unique threat to sage grouse habitat, worthy of its own extraordinary stipulations?

This EIS has the potential to radically alter the ways of life of thousands of residents of northwestern Colorado; as such, it is expected that the BLM would dedicate themselves to ensuring that the best and most accurate, up-to-date information is made available, both to the staff members preparing the land use plan, and to the public.

With this in mind, I cannot support any of the offered alternatives, until such time as it is made clear to the public that the best science (meaning the most factual, not what helps you arrive at the answer you want) has been used to put together the plan and alternatives.

Best,

Craig Unfred

Craig Unfred
623 Hamlet Street
Grand Junction, CO 81506

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BLM – Greater Sage Grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

October 23, 2013

Ref: Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this RMP amendment which has the potential to dramatically impact northwest Colorado. I believe that this RMP/EIS does not reflect an unbiased scientific approach to the issue of preserving sage grouse habitat while retaining the multiple-use principle of public lands use. Existing, peer-reviewed studies contradict the maps displayed in the document, which suggest that far more land in the region is comprised of suitable sage grouse habitat than is the reality. Sage grouse habitat in our part of the national sage grouse range is naturally spottier and, as you do admit in the Executive Summary, more fragmented than areas to the north. Your office did not adequately back up the claim that "connectivity habitat" is an under looked concern in rejecting the Garfield County sage grouse plan, a plan which offers a more balanced and workable solution.

The Draft EIS put out by your agency also offers a distinct bias against oil and gas, which is also not justified anywhere in the document. The EIS specifically lists oil and gas development as a threat to sage grouse habitat, without explaining how, or presenting any evidence to suggest that oil and gas development poses any particularly greater risk to such habitat than any other type of activity. The EIS, including the preferred Alternative, lists area by area no-surface occupancy stipulations, caps, and buffer zones specifically directed against oil and gas (see charts in chapter 2, under "Fluid Minerals" Program Area), not to mention an entire appendix dedicated to stipulations concerning oil and gas development. Again, none of this is justified by any data, suggesting that the EIS is more based on ideology than science.

All of these stipulations and restrictions will negatively impact regional job growth, development, incomes, and revenues. Nobody wants to see sage grouse habitat wantonly destroyed, but we do want to see its management be consistent with a healthy economic climate, and for any decisions made by the BLM that will bear consequences on us, to be made on a firm scientific basis, and not be driven by opinion or agenda. Unfortunately, this EIS seems to be driven by just that.

I recommend that this EIS be re-started, and that solid scientific facts be used as the basis for recommended measures.

Sincerely,

Colton Vaughn
1231 Bunting Ave
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Oct. 23rd, 2013

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BLM – Greater Sage Grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Ref: Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS

To whom it may concern:

I would like to register my disapproval of the above-reference RMP/EIS. There seems to have been no consideration given to the economic health of the region, nor to the concerns and recommendations of the people who live here. The EIS and all of its included action alternatives were prepared strictly within the confines of a dubious NTT study, which has not been peer-reviewed, its authorship not made public, and many of its findings countermanded by more credible sources.

From this, we have options that range from bad to worse for northwestern Colorado. Although ours is an energy-driven economy, the alternatives specifically attack mining and oil and gas drilling for special restrictions. The No Surface Occupancy stipulations imposed exclusively on oil and gas exploration and production operations have no foundation in science, and will put an even greater strain on a regional economy that is already struggling. Why do Sage Grouse leks require a 4 mile NSO buffer zone?

There are studies and data that show that the actual sage grouse habitat is considerably less than what is delineated in your EIS. It would be more in standing with the long established principle of multiple use if the BLM would rely on honest science and objective studies to base decisions. For this reason, I cannot in good conscience support any of the Alternatives presented, and instead strongly urge the BLM to return to the drawing board, and develop RMP amendments that are more in line with the reality on the ground, and that will accommodate the people and economy of the region.

Signed,

Dennis White

Dennis White
711 Independence Valley Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81507

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October 22, 2013

Erin Jones
Northwest Colorado Sub-Region Project Lead
BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Re: GRSG EIS

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I am writing to object to the proposed land use amendments, on the grounds that they are based on science that is at best incomplete, and at worst faulty.

The reports cited in the EIS, particularly the one prepared by the National Technical Team (NTT) appear to have been tailored to meet predetermined objectives rather than to honestly discover the true extent and condition of Greater Sage Grouse (GRSG) habitat.

The lands designated as Priority Habitat, for example, do not appear to have been selected on the basis of any objective, fact based criteria, as the acreage designated as such far exceeds that identified in any existing studies. In addition, there exist little, if any, available data to support the 4 mile buffer zone established in the EIS around active leks, in which oil and gas activity would be prohibited. Why would this arbitrary buffer zone be included in every alternative when there is no credible data to support it?

If the BLM is going to institute wide-ranging restrictions and land use stipulations that will severely impact local economic conditions, as these will, it is incumbent upon the agency to be open and transparent concerning the scientific basis on which it is making these decisions. At the very least, substantive peer review of the NTT findings should be courted and published, and the names of the scientists who arrived at the various conclusions should be released.

Until such time as the data is properly reviewed and the proposed actions are adequately justified, it is exceedingly premature to adopt any of the action alternatives. I therefore recommend that significantly more time be allotted to gathering real evidence, as opposed to simply arranging scraps of data to support a predetermined course of action.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Oden
742 Munro Ave
Rifle, CO 81650

Oct. 23, 2013

BLM Greater Sage Grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Attn: Erin Jones, Northwest Colorado Sub-Region Project Lead

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Dear Mrs. Jones,

This letter is intended to provide my input on the recently released Draft RMP Amendments and Environmental Impact Statement concerning Greater Sage Grouse habitat within BLM lands in Northwest Colorado. In my opinion, the draft has failed to properly take into consideration the economy of northwest Colorado, the scientific data concerning the greater sage grouse and their habitat in our region, and the concerns of the people and local governments.

There are several provisions within the EIS that will pose devastating consequences to the local economy; the disturbance caps set for both individual projects, and cumulatively for the entire planning area, will have the effect of severely limiting drilling, mining, and recreation, three of our biggest industries. With the cumulative 30% cap especially, these limitations could be long-lasting, and result in increased human migration out of our area. The four mile No Surface Occupancy stipulations placed on the oil and gas industry around sage grouse leks will further jeopardize that important industry. This will not only impact the directly affected companies and their workers, but the impact will echo down to virtually every small business in every town within the region; hotels, restaurants, equipment dealers, industrial supply shops, even outdoor recreation businesses will be affected.

What makes this worse is that the provisions that will cause the most harm are not even based on a solid scientific foundation. However the National Technical Team (NTT), whose work the entire EIS is based off of, arrived at the data they did, much of it is directly contradicted by several reputable studies that have been conducted in the area. At the very least the BLM should have looked at these other studies, which show a more realistic distribution of sage grouse habitat, and attempted to reconcile the data.

The BLM should have also accepted the input of the cooperating agencies, including local county and municipal governments, who were willing to offer solutions that would balance economic and ecological needs. Instead, they were largely ignored, told that all input had to fall within the confines of the flawed NTT recommendations.

With all of this in mind, I would suggest that the BLM re-do the EIS, following extensive consultation with the wider scientific community and local cooperating agencies.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Tice

Elizabeth Tice
776 25 ¾ Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81505

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Erin Jones

BLM Greater Sage Grouse EIS
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

NW Colorado GRSG Draft LUPA/EIS

Dear Mrs. Jones,

This EIS falls short of meeting the requirement that the best available scientific data be used. Both the National Technical Team (NTT) and Cobb reports either do not include, or have disregarded, the most recent, objective, and accurate information pertaining to the characteristics and distribution of Wyoming and Mountain Sagebrush, the principle habitat of the Greater Sage-grouse. These shortcomings are reflected in the maps used, showing the acreage being designated as Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH), Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) and so-called Connectivity Habitat. The result of using incomplete information is that restrictive measures are being applied to lands that do not require them for habitat preservation, thereby causing undue economic hardships.

Some of these include the 4-mile buffer zone prohibiting surface occupancy related to oil and gas production, around leks during a considerable amount of the year. There is no verifiable reason to have imposed these buffers on the areas described in Chapter 2. The habitat in northwest Colorado is much more fragmented than elsewhere within the bird's range, and terrain varies considerably within 4 miles in these areas. I would request that the BLM provide any evidence they have, that a) the areas they have designated as PPH actually do entirely comprise of suitable Greater Sage Grouse habitat; b) that these areas contain active leks, and c) prohibiting oil and gas surface use within a 4 mile radius is necessary to protect them.

Similarly, the disturbance caps (3 percent for Alternatives B & C, 5 percent for Alternative D, and 30% for the wider planning area) will clearly have an adverse impact on many types of economic activity – including, but not limited to, grazing, mining, infrastructure development, communications, and oil and gas development. However, the EIS fails to adequately explain why these caps are necessary, and to demonstrate that there is no alternative.

The fact is that there are other alternatives, and had the BLM consulted with various local governments, State of Colorado agencies, and other local stakeholders, you would have found workable solutions that accomplish both protection for the habitat, and preservation of the economic life of the region. This process should go back to the drawing board and a new range of alternatives should be drafted that take stakeholder and cooperator information and programs, and the best available scientific data, into account.

Sincerely,

Kelsie Betz

1231 Bunting Ave
Grand Junction, CO 81501

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2013 NOV 27 PM 12: 43

October 22, 2013

ATTN:Erin Jones
Northwest Colorado Sub-Region Project Lead
BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

RE: NW Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Draft EIS

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I am writing to protest the draft Sage Grouse EIS, its presented alternatives, and its proposed measures. None of the alternatives are acceptable to the people who live in North West Colorado, in that they all inflict permanent and unjustified economic harm to our region.

The EIS proposes broad disturbance caps over much of the area from 3 – 5%, with an overall cumulative cap of 30%. Ours is a resource based economy; this will greatly reduce oil and gas drilling projects, infrastructure improvements, mining operations, grazing, and recreation, all industries that comprise the bulk of rural North West Colorado's economy. With the reduction of these activities, various other small businesses that support these industries will also begin to suffer. As we are a predominantly rural region without a large population base, each f these job losses and business closures will affect virtually everyone.

There are other provisions in this EIS that will have similar detrimental impacts. The proposed 4-mile NSO buffer zone that will be implemented around sage grouse lek areas and applied to fluid mineral development will have a cumulative effect on our local oil and gas industry. Between the disturbance caps and the NSO stipulations, this EIS is making it virtually impossible for the energy industry to operate in North West Colorado. This is particularly unfortunate, because the local industry has been a fantastic corporate neighbor, and has contributed a great deal to the community, not just in creating jobs and income, but through donations, and other acts of charity.

Your agency and parent Department need to realize that there are real-world consequences to the decisions you make. It would have been enormously helpful if you had included the local cooperating agencies, and accepted their advice. In closing, I wish to ask you to re-start the process, and come back with something that the people of North West rural Colorado can live with.

Signed,

Pete Lipson
2158 Glenn Stone Court
Grand Junction, CO 81507

October 24, 2013

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2013 NOV 25 PM 3: 11

Erin Jones
NEPA Coordinator
BLM Northwest Colorado District
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

RE: NW Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Plan

Dear Mrs. Jones,

Regarding the referenced draft land use amendment and EIS, I cannot support any of the proffered alternatives. Each are very similar in scope, and all will create job losses, business closures, sharp reductions in regional income and local government revenue, and contribute further to young people leaving the area for greener pastures.

The amount of land designated in the EIS as Priority Habitat is staggering and unrealistic. It is not made clear where or how the data was collected to support this designation, but I have seen other reports that peg the actual amount of suitable habitat at a much lower acreage. Before I can accept the maps, let alone the specific proposed measures to be followed within the designated habitat, I need to see the raw data, and know who conducted the research, and be satisfied that it was done in a manner that respects and follows the scientific method. In short, if the science is not unimpeachable, it has no business being used to make decisions that will have incredible economic and social impacts.

As for the specific measures, some of them, too, fall short of the standards I would expect of the BLM in applying to such a major undertaking. There is not data published in the EIS or the appendices that support, for instance, the disturbance caps, or the NSO stipulations for oil and gas development.

I think many of us quite frankly expected something a little better from the federal government. All I am asking is that you apply the same high standards to this project that you have applied to other endeavors. There is a wealth of pertinent and timely information available, from work that other agencies, at the state and local level, have done, to 3rd party studies. Please make use of these, and then present the people of northwest Colorado a plan they can live and work with.

Sincerely,

Gina Reece-Long
129 Larkspur Court
Silt, CO 81652

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2013 NOV 25 PM 3: 10

October 24, 2013

Erin Jones,
Northwest Colorado Project Leader.
BLM Greater Sage Grouse EIS
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Dear Mrs. Jones:

I am writing to express my profound disappointment with the direction that the BLM took in preparing the NW Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Draft Land Use Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement. The document harbors a clear bias against energy development, especially oil and gas, and includes measures that will be exceedingly harmful to the local economy, and that are based on remarkably thin evidence.

The National Technical Team reports used to justify the habitat designations, land use stipulations, disturbance caps, and other measures have not, to my knowledge, been peer reviewed or otherwise subject to a level of scrutiny adequate to be considered acceptable for forming the basis of decision making for an endeavor of this scope. This puts into question all of the items that came about from reliance on its findings.

The Priority Habitat Designations in particular do not correspond with findings from other studies; the BLM and NTT seem to have unilaterally discovered sage grouse habitat in northwestern Colorado that was previously unknown to everybody! The effect of blindly expanding acreage to be covered by the PPH designation is to simultaneously expand the amount of land placed off limits to economic activity. The NSO stipulations attached to fluid minerals production are made more onerous because of the amount of land designated as being potential lekking ground. Also, the disturbance caps are more harmful simply because they are applied to more ground under the current EIS.

The document prescribes roughly 1.3 million acres to be subject to new NSO stipulations for oil and gas operations. Where is the justification for this? No credible, published study recommends a *4 mile* buffer zone around a lekking site.

This EIS is antagonistic to a primary northwestern Colorado industry, and the adoption of any of the action alternatives would result inevitably in major job losses and further economic calamity; that the decisions that lead to this are based on unreliable science is just adding insult to injury.

Sincerely,

Brenda Ladd

Brenda Ladd
65 Pinyon Place
Parachute, CO 81635

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2013 NOV 25 PM 3: 10

11/20/13

BLM
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Ref: NW Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is intended to convey my deep disappointment over the sage grouse draft EIS. There is an obvious bias against oil and gas interests built into all of the action alternatives. Fluid mineral development is the only Program Area that is subject to the egregious no surface occupancy stipulations listed in the charts in chapter 2.

There was no justification given for this, and I have not seen anywhere in the EIS where data supporting these buffer zones, which exclude oil and gas development within 4 miles of a sage grouse "lek", is presented.

The EIS fails to present evidence explaining its habitat designations as well. Contrary to work done by wildlife biologists locally, the EIS maps suggest that most of northwest Colorado is prime habitat for the bird. This is not in actuality the case, as sage grouse habitat this far south is more fragmented than that to the north, and requires different management strategies. This was not taken into account in the draft presented to the public.

This and other inconsistencies with the reality on the ground raise questions about the validity of the NTT study on which the EIS was based. These questions are compounded by the lack of transparency surrounding the NTT study. Before any further action is taken by the BLM in regards to this EIS, the process around the science needs to be cleaned up and made available to the public. The study should be peer reviewed, and if it has been, those reviews released, along with the names of the scientists responsible for gathering and compiling the NTT data.

Until the public can be properly assured that the best available scientific data was used, it would be imprudent to continue with the NEPA process.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Ladd
65 Pinyon Place
Parachute, CO 81635

BLM Greater Sage-grouse EIS
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

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Attn. Mrs. Erin Jones

Dear Mrs. Jones,

Thank you for extending the opportunity to comment on this critically important matter. With so much of western Colorado's land being federally owned, any decisions or actions that the BLM, Forest Service, or other federal land agencies make have an acute impact on the people, environment, and economy of the region.

In regards to this EIS, the impacts should any of the alternatives be adopted would be devastating. We are very dependent on the land and its resources for our livelihoods, and the provisions described in all of the action alternatives would jeopardize that to a great extent.

The amount of land that you have designated as Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) is excessive, and the stipulations applied to the land so designated will have lasting negative impacts to economic development, job growth, and individual families, farms and other businesses.

The disturbance caps that are applied to this acreage will limit the number of development projects, and uses enormously. These caps will not only limit major infrastructure projects that would leave a long-term mark on the land, but also those that would only have temporary impacts, like oil and gas drilling and grazing. Similar impacts would be realized in the event that the 4 mile NSO buffers applied to fluid mineral (oil and gas) development in certain areas was ever enforced. With your PPH designation being so expansive, this would eliminate a great deal of exploration, drilling and production activity. We depend on that activity to support our economy, and the loss of mining and drilling opportunities would hit everyone in the region hard.

There are better, more scientifically sound ways to address wildlife and habitat conservation without crippling the surrounding area's economy. Garfield County developed a proposal that did just that, and other communities in the region have similar thoughts and experience that could accomplish the aims of the BLM while protecting our jobs. Please consult with these local entities before proceeding with this process.

Respectfully,

Frank Ladd
65 Pinyon Place
Parachute, CO 81635

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11/20/13

Erin Jones
BLM Northwest Colorado District
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Regarding: Sage Grouse planning

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I appreciate the opportunity to offer my comments on this EIS and resulting RMP amendment. While I also appreciate the work the BLM has done, I am sorry to say that I cannot see fit to recommend any of the proposed alternatives.

One big reason is that they were all developed with very little input from local governments, and other cooperating agencies. These organizations represent the people who live here, and had a lot to offer the process. To be told that their participation was limited to keeping within the boundaries of the National Technical Team's analysis, goes against the spirit of the NEPA process, where one would think that all of the contributions of local stakeholders would be welcome.

It is not only disappointing that the concerns and input of the cooperating agencies was not fully considered as it should have been, but it is also a shame that the fine conservation work already being done by various entities in Colorado was disregarded. There is a regulatory framework already in place within the state that should have been credited, and which would have possibly made some of the harsher mitigation measures called for in the EIS redundant.

The benefits to preparing a land use plan in close cooperation with local communities include a better perspective of the socio-economic issues. All of us in rural Colorado cherish our land and wildlife, and none of us want to see harm come to the sage grouse. But neither do we wish to see harm come to our economy, as this draft promises. For us, it is not a choice between exclusive alternatives; we know how to balance economic development and environmental protection, because we live it every day, and have done so for many years. This is what makes the lack of coordination and respect from the BLM so tragic.

I believe that the best course of action is to start over, and re-examine this EIS – this time, accepting the full participation of the local cooperating agencies and incorporating their information.

Yours truly,

Annick Pruett
712 Buckeye Court
Rifle, CO 81650