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November 30, 2013

To: BLM Grand Junction Field Office

Hand Delivered--Re: Comments on Proposed Plans of Action

The writer respectfully submits comments on the Proposed Plans of Action concerning the Greater Sage Grouse EIS for Northwest Colorado which was recently published. If the BLM must take action on this, I submit that Alt. A is by far the preferable Action, for the following reasons:

It does not further disrupt the economic situation in the EIS Planning Area. This entire area has been severely damaged economically, occasioned by restrictive rules passed recently by the Colorado Legislature as regards oil and gas exploration and the transportaion of their product to market. Upon passage of these regulations, a significant percentage of drilling operations were quickly moved from the Planning Area to states that have more favorable regulations. The result was that the economy of Western Colorado, which had been robust, reacted and swiftly went into a semi-depressed stage, and has not yet recovered. Any further unwarranted restrictions will just make matters worse! For those and other considerations, I believe that if we must have a plan, Alternative A is the best plan. Frankly, no action would be the best for the population of the affected area. If the BLM must take action, Second choice would be Alternative D, although it would still have significant negative effects on the regional economy. Alternatives B and C would be disasterous not only to the oil and gas industry, but also to the Ranchers in the Planning Area, which would be denied grazing permits on federal lands. Some of them and their predecessors have been there for generations, and rely heavily on being able to have the grazing permits (which they pay for) to be able to have a successful operation.

There are other ways to protect the Sage Grouse that make more sense than any of the offered plans, viz:

1. Do away with the hunting of Sage Grouse in the entire planning area--it makes no sense to try to protect the Grouse while some of the areas are still open to limited harvesting. I wish to make it clear that I am not averse to hunting. I hunted various birds (Doves, Quail, Pheasants, Chukar, Ducks and Geese) and also big game for many years, but retired from that a few years ago. I do encourage my children and grandchildren to participate in hunting.

2. Control the predators (principally coyotes, crows and ravens) that prey on either the Grouse or their eggs. These likely are the most dangerous to the Grouse population, either by killing outright (Coyotes) or by raiding the nests and eating the eggs (Crows and Ravens) thereby diminishing reproduction. Money spent on control, together with eliminating Grouse hunting, would be the most productive and cost effective way to protect them. You may find that a lot of volunteers would do the predator control at no cost to either the federal or state government.

One should keep in mind that regardless of what is done to protect the birds, 99.9xx percent of all species which have lived on earth have become extinct (Neuman, Mark 1994 and Raup, David M. 1991), and ultimately the Sage Grouse will be among those. That does not mean that we shouldn't protect the populations that exist now, within reasonable limits, but points out that some things are beyond the control of humans.

Respectfully submitted,



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