

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2023

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

We write to request your support for the continued inclusion of an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing prohibition for the greater sage-grouse in any upcoming end-of-year spending packages. This prohibition has been included in annual spending bills since fiscal year 2015, to the substantial benefit of wildlife populations and western communities.

Species conservation is a deeply held value in the West, and the greater sage-grouse stands as a prime example of our best efforts. Each of the eleven western states which hold sage-grouse habitat have adopted their own collaborative, science-based conservation plans, tailored specifically to address localized landscape needs and recover the species. These plans were made with extensive contributions from diverse stakeholders including scientific experts, conservationists, federal officials, and local industry leaders.

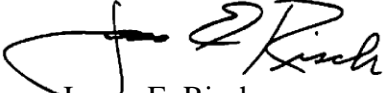
However, despite this transparent and scientific approach, the greater sage-grouse has constantly been the subject of continuous litigation and baseless, counterproductive listing petitions for years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has repeatedly and consistently found the existing combination of state-led strategies to be successful in preventing the need to list the species, despite three listing considerations within a ten-year period. The constant threat of litigation greatly undermines the collaborative process first started by the Obama Administration in 2011 and continued now by bipartisan western governors and the Biden Administration.

The listing prohibition has more deeply ingrained, not ignored, the western commitment to conserving the greater sage-grouse. In fact, each year the listing prohibition has been in place, funding for sage-grouse conservation has continued to rise. This is due to the commitment and partnerships of federal, state, and local leaders who take ownership and responsibility in the achievement of their individual plans. In contrast, cyclical litigation diverts time and resources which could otherwise be used for sincere conservation efforts.


Species conservation is a gradual process, and conservation plans require time to be implemented without disruption in order to show results. States and local communities have invested years in the development and application of sage-grouse conservation. Continuing to provide for their expertise and on-the-ground decision-making has been indisputably proven as the best way to conserve the greater sage-grouse and

rural communities alike. The continuation of a prohibition against ESA listing for the greater sage-grouse is vital for the long-term survival of the species. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

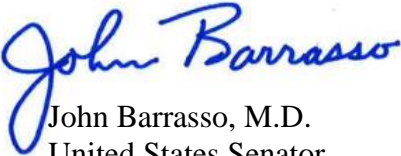
Sincerely,



James E. Risch
United States Senator




Mike Crapo
United States Senator




John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



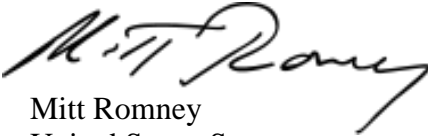
John Hoeven
United States Senator




Kevin Cramer
United States Senator




Steve Daines
United States Senator



Mitt Romney
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



Michael S. Lee
United States Senator