

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-222 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-107 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, and Chairwoman Lowey:

As you negotiate the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 appropriations bill for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, we urge you to ensure that the rider from previous appropriations bills that prohibits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) from considering the greater sage-grouse for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is not included in the final bill. We very much appreciate that the House version of the Interior bill eliminated the rider and urge you to stand strong in upholding the House position in year-end negotiations on the appropriations bills.

The greater sage-grouse is a keystone species in the Sagebrush Sea ecosystem, which stretches across eleven western states and supports more than 350 other species of conservation concern. Today, sage-grouse range is half of what it once was, and populations have declined precipitously in recent years.


In 2015, the Obama Administration developed a series of collaborative conservation plans with stakeholders across the American West, engaging governors, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, and state and local officials in a public planning process to enhance sagebrush habitat and better manage resources across the range of the sage-grouse.

The desire to avoid the need to list the greater sage-grouse under the ESA was a strong motivator to keep stakeholders engaged in the collaborative process; unfortunately, that motivation has been removed as Congress has repeatedly inserted politics into what should be a scientific determination about whether the species warrants ESA protections. Moreover, the Trump administration has been working to further upend this carefully crafted approach, rolling back critical conservation protections to allow for more oil and gas drilling and mining in essential sage-grouse habitat. It is important that FWS scientists be permitted to assess the current population conditions of the greater-sage grouse and be allowed to do their jobs, unencumbered by politics.

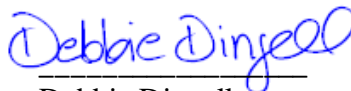
Recent studies have found that about one million of the estimated eight million species on earth may be pushed to extinction, many within decades, while already a staggering three million birds have been lost since 1970. The ESA is one of our nation's most important conservation laws. Given this extinction crisis, decisions about which species need protection should be based solely on science. It is long past time for the sage-grouse rider to be eliminated from the final appropriations bill.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

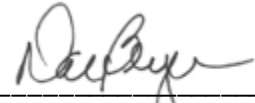
Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

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Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

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Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

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Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

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Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress

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Abigail D. Spanberger  
Member of Congress

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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress

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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

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Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress

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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress

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Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress

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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

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David E. Price  
Member of Congress

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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

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Brendan F. Boyle  
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Joe Neguse  
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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Harley Rouda  
Member of Congress

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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

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A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

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Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress