

From: [Gavin Shire](#)
To: [Betsy Hildebrandt](#); [Matthew Huggler](#); [Martin Kodis](#); [Doug Hobbs](#); [Laury Parramore](#); [Monroe Nancy](#); [Anna Munoz](#); [Jason Holm](#)
Subject: Fwd: Sage Grouse Materials
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2017 5:29:32 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.htm](#)
[PR_SageGrouse_v1.docx](#)
[Remarks_CallSageGrouse_v1.docx](#)
[ATT00002.htm](#)

FYI

G

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Laura Rigas <laura_rigas@ios.doi.gov>
Date: June 7, 2017 at 5:28:54 PM EDT
To: abwade@usgs.gov, cpuckett@usgs.gov, gavin_shire@fws.gov,
mrallen@blm.gov
Cc: Heather Swift <heather_swift@ios.doi.gov>, alex_hinson@ios.doi.gov, Paul
Ross <paul_ross@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Sage Grouse Materials

Hi all --

As I mentioned in our meeting today, the Secretary is holding a press call (which also includes stakeholders) at 5:30pm announcing a secretarial order on land management and the sage grouse. He's currently finishing up his call with Western governors.

Attached is the script for the media call and the draft press release. We plan to release it first thing in the am.

Please let me know if you have any issues with the release before 9am tomorrow. Also, anyone missing from this email? I've included BLM, USGS, and F&W.

Thanks!

My best,
L

Laura Keehner Rigas
Communications Director
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DRAFT NEWS RELEASE

June 7, 2017

**Secretary Zinke Signs Order to Improve Sage-Grouse Conservation,
Strengthen Communication and Collaboration Between States and Feds**

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today signed a secretarial order to improve sage-grouse conservation and strengthen communication and collaboration between state and federal governments. Together, the Federal government and states will work to conserve and protect Sage-Grouse and its habitat while also ensuring conservation efforts do not impede local economic opportunities.

In signing Secretarial Order **xxxx**, Secretary Zinke established an internal review team that will evaluate both Federal Sage-Grouse plans and state plans and programs to ensure they are complementary. As the team explores possible plan modifications, it will also consider local economic growth and job creation.

“Year after year, local communities watched as the federal government put restrictions on public lands in the name of sage-grouse conservation,” **said Secretary Zinke**. “While the federal government has a responsibility under the endangered species act to take action, destroying local communities and levying onerous regulation on public lands that they rely on is no way to be a good neighbor. State agencies are at the forefront of efforts to maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations, and we need to make sure they are being heard on this issue. As we move forward with implementation of our strategy for sage-grouse conservation, we want to make sure that we do so first and foremost in consultation with state and local governments, and in a manner that allows both wildlife and local economies to thrive.”

In September 2015, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture finalized the Greater Sage-grouse plans, which included amendments and revisions to 98 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service land use plans in 11 Western states. The plans were cited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as a key reason for its decision that the Greater Sage-grouse did not merit protection under the Endangered Species Act. Protection under the act could potentially stifle economic development across large areas of the American West where more than half of Sage-Grouse habitat is on public lands managed by the BLM and the Forest Service.

The Secretary has asked this interagency team of experts from the BLM, FWS, and U.S. Geological Survey to focus on addressing the principal threats to rangeland health and Sage-Grouse habitat—invasive grasses and wildland fire. The team will also consider creative

approaches and ideas, including a captive breeding program, setting population targets by state, and opportunities to improve state involvement.

The team will examine the plans in light of policies set forth in Secretarial Order 3349, American Energy Independence. To this end, the team will be asked to identify plan provisions that may need to be adjusted or rescinded based on the potential for energy and other development on public lands.

This Secretarial Order follows through on statements Secretary Zinke made during his confirmation hearing, when he stated that he understands each state has different needs and issues and committed to working with them and local communities. He concluded that together the Federal government, states and western communities will get this job done.

Thank you all for joining the call today. Today we are going to talk about sage grouse.

As a former congressman from Montana and a life-long westerner, I can tell you that there's a lot of distrust and a lot of anger out there for how the federal government manages the land without really listening to states and locals.

Year after year, local communities watched as the federal government put restrictions on public lands in the name of sage-grouse conservation.

Some state agencies and other stakeholders have indicated that they did not believe they were heard by the Administration on issues surrounding the conservation of Sage-Grouse.

We want to gather those concerns, look at the states' existing plans and programs to manage Sage-Grouse and identify opportunities for improved collaboration.

While the federal government has a responsibility under the endangered species act to take action, we also have a responsibility to be a good neighbor and a good partner.

Destroying local economies and levying onerous regulations on public lands that these communities rely on is no way to be a good neighbor.

State agencies are at the forefront of efforts to maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations, and we need to make sure they are being heard on this issue.

As we move forward with implementation of our strategy for sage-grouse conservation, we want to make sure that we do so first and foremost in consultation with state and local governments, and in a manner that allows both wildlife and local economies to thrive.

As the nation's largest land manager, the Department is committed to administering America's public lands for multiple uses, including economic development, conservation, and sustained yield of our natural resources.

Today's Secretarial Order will enhance and improve collaboration with 11 Western states engaged in the conservation of sage-grouse by improving collaboration with states to explore new approaches and ideas for effective Sage-Grouse and sagebrush management and conservation.

The Order will also allow the Department and its agencies to build on the work that has been done to find practical and effective implementation strategies.

The Secretarial Order establishes an interagency team of experts from the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey to review the plans.

The team will evaluate both Federal Sage-Grouse plans and state plans and programs to ensure they are complementary.

As the team explores possible plan modifications, it will also consider local economic growth and job creation.

While reviewing the plans, the team will be asked to focus on addressing the principal threats to rangeland health and Sage-Grouse habitat—invasive grasses and wildland fire—particularly in the Great Basin states.

The team will explore creative approaches and ideas, including a captive breeding program, setting population targets by state, and opportunities to improve state involvement.

The review will also consider the impact these Sage-Grouse plans have on states with a disproportionately large percentage of Federal lands.

The team will examine the plans in light of policies set forth in Secretarial Order 3349, American Energy Independence.

To this end, the team will be asked to identify plan provisions that may need to be adjusted or rescinded based on the potential for energy and other development on public lands.

Today's action on sage-grouse fulfills another promise I made during my confirmation process to work with states and local communities to find the best path forward on federal lands issues.

With that I'll take a few questions.