



January 18, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
Majority Whip
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Leadership:

The Public Lands Council is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property. The American Sheep Industry Association is the national voice of the 88,000 sheep producers throughout the country who produce America's lamb and wool.

PLC, NCBA, and ASI strongly support Congress' use of its authority under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to withdraw the Bureau of Land Management's Planning 2.0 rulemaking. Collectively, the members of these associations are substantially impacted by any federal land management planning process, and Planning 2.0 – finalized in December of last year as part of the outgoing administration's onslaught of midnight rulemakings – will radically alter both the objectives of such processes and the manner in which they proceed.

As stated in our public comments submitted on the proposed rule last year (attached), we applaud the BLM's acknowledgement that the current resource management planning process is in need of modernization and overhaul. Additionally, we appreciate the revisions that the BLM made to the final rule in response to public comment. Unfortunately, these changes are mostly cosmetic and fail to address the wholesale shift in management focus and elimination of local input brought about by this rule. Despite a mandate to manage for multiple use and sustained yield, Planning 2.0 shifts that focus toward new objectives like environmental and social change.

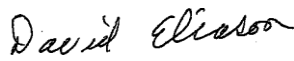
As has been the case all too often in the past eight years, flowery public statements and summaries regarding cooperation with local impacted communities or sensitivity to local impacts belies the reality of reduced comment period lengths, reduced communication through elimination of the role of BLM state directors, and overall reduced input into the process. Further, we object to the continued exclusion of federal grazing permittees and other multiple uses as legitimate stakeholders; instead lumping all such groups under the general category of "public" despite the existence of formal business relationships with the federal government.

A prime example of the disregard shown to impacted local communities and stakeholders is made evident by the very "public process" by which this rulemaking evolved. Public meetings were not held in the rural areas or communities where the impacts would be most heavily felt. Instead, they

were held in downtown Sacramento, CA and downtown Denver, CO, where attendance was overwhelmingly urban dwellers without livelihoods or homes at stake, or any real knowledge of the impacts on the people and businesses that exist in the impacted areas. This led to biased and inaccurate public sentiment.

PLC, NCBA, and ASI applaud your efforts and appreciate the opportunity to provide input on behalf of our members – the nation’s food and fiber producers. We encourage members of Congress to take action to withdraw BLM’s Planning 2.0 final rule and provide the incoming administration an opportunity to begin a new, inclusive, constructive process to overhaul land use planning processes.

Sincerely,



Dave Eliason
President
Public Lands Council



Tracy Brunner
President
National Cattlemen’s Beef Assn.



Burton Pfliger
President
American Sheep Industry Assn.

Association of National Grasslands
Arizona Cattle Growers Association
California Cattlemen’s Association
California Wool Growers Association
Colorado Cattlemen’s Association
Colorado Wool Growers Association
Idaho Cattle Association
Idaho Wool Growers Association
Montana Association of State Grazing Districts
Montana Public Lands Council
Montana Stockgrowers Association
Montana Wool Growers Association
Nevada Cattlemen’s Association
New Mexico Cattle Growers’ Association
New Mexico Wool Grower, Inc
North Dakota Stockmen’s Association
Oregon Cattlemen’s Association
South Dakota Cattlemen’s Association
South Dakota Public Lands Council
Utah Cattlemen’s Association
Utah Wool Growers Association
Washington Cattlemen’s Association
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association