



RESOLUTION 2018-05
CONCERNING IMPACTS ON STATE TRUST LANDS
FROM FEDERAL GREATER SAGE-GROUSE LAND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

Whereas, the Western States Land Commissioners Association ("WSLCA") and its member states manage over 515 million acres of trust lands, minerals, and waterways that are interspersed with federal lands; and

Whereas, members of WSLCA have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands for economic development, public education, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, the ability of member states to fulfill their constitutional mandates is severely hindered when trust lands are surrounded by federal lands and federal wildlife management mandates; and

Whereas, the habitat of Greater Sage-Grouse covers more than 173 million acres of land in the western United States and millions of acres of State Trust assets are intermingled within this habitat; and

Whereas, in September of 2015, the Department of Interior through the Bureau of Land Management issued Records of Decisions amending 98 land use plans mandating specific management criteria for Greater Sage-Grouse on federal lands within the 173 million acres of habitat; and

Whereas, Federal Greater Sage-Grouse land management restrictions significantly impair the ability of WSLCA member states to generate income from state trust lands and assets that are intermingled with federal land ownership within Sage-Grouse habitat; and

Whereas, litigation in several states has been initiated by Governors and stakeholders resulting in a court order (Case No. 3:15-cv-00491-mmd-vpc) requiring preparation of a supplemental National Environmental Policy Act process; and

Whereas, Secretary Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3353 on June 7, 2017 to enhance cooperation between the Department of Interior and the eleven Greater Sage-Grouse states, support a partnership with clearly defined objectives and roles for Federal and State entities responsible for Sage-Grouse management and conservation in order to sustain healthy populations of the species; and establish a team to review the Federal land management agencies' Sage-Grouse plan amendments and revisions completed on or before September 2015; and

Whereas, the BLM published six draft Environmental Impact Statements for the revision of Resource Management Plans (RMP) in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming in May of 2018; and

Whereas, the BLM is proposing to amend the 2015 RMPs with the purpose of enhancing cooperation with the States by modifying the approach to Greater Sage-Grouse management in existing RMPs to better align with individual state plans and/or conservation measures and DOI and BLM policy; and


Whereas, the United States Forest Service (USFS) published a Supplemental Notice of Intent in June of 2018 to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to amend the 2015 USFS management plans with the purpose of incorporating new information to improve the clarity, efficiency, and implementation of greater sage-grouse plans, including better alignment with the BLM and state plans, in order to benefit greater sage-grouse conservation on the landscape scale; and

Whereas, States have primary jurisdiction for the management of wildlife within their own borders.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The WSLCA urges the Department of Interior to continue to work with the Governors of Greater Sage-Grouse states to review current data and actions carried out by states to manage and improve Sage-Grouse habitat, curtail predator impacts, protect against wildfire, and manage and increase species populations within their borders under state management; and
2. The WSLCA urges the Department of Interior to complete Resource Management Plan amendments to determine the appropriate role of the Federal Government in the management of Sage-Grouse within WSLCA member states and to align Federal management requirements with State planning and management regulations; and
3. The WSLCA urges the Department of Interior to consider the impacts of federal land management restrictions on adjacent state lands and minerals and the economic impacts on education funding within WSLCA member states.

Adopted this 11th day of July, 2018.


Harry Birdwell, President
WSLCA


Bridget Hill, Secretary
WSLCA