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March 23, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers,
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
2406 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey,
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
2365 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert,
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum,
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Calvert, and Ranking Members Lowey and McCollum,

We are writing today to urge you to include in the FY 2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill the full amount of funding requested by the Department of the Interior to support conservation of the greater-sage grouse (sage grouse). The Bureau of Land Management has requested a total of $60 million to implement the Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy and the Fish and Wildlife Service has requested $4 million for conservation of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem. Fully funding these efforts is critical to ensuring that we can conserve sage grouse populations and avoid the species being listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The health of sage grouse is inextricably linked to the health of the West's most iconic and recognizable landscape – the sagebrush steppe. Ensuring that development and use of natural resources is compatible with conservation of this ecosystem is the key to keeping the sage grouse off of the list of threatened and endangered species – an outcome we all desire. BLM and FWS are undertaking an unprecedented collaborative effort working with states, localities, and businesses to develop resource management plans and carry out other strategies that will protect the sagebrush landscape.

These activities are our best chance to prove that we can conserve sage grouse and allow for responsible development of natural resources without having to list the bird under the ESA. Fully funding this effort is also an opportunity to prove that a more collaborative and comprehensive approach to landscape conservation under the ESA can serve all of our interests better than

narrowly focused attempts to simply keep species from going extinct. Thank you for your consideration of our request and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Raúl Ruiz
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer, Jr
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Madeleine Z. Bordallo
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