

July 15, 2014

Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Neil Kornze
BLM Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Madam Secretary and Director Kornze:

For decades, we, the undersigned fish and wildlife professionals, have been dedicated to conserving, enhancing and responsibly managing America's fish and wildlife resources on both public and privately owned lands.

We recognize the critical importance of habitat provided by 245 million acres of Bureau of Land Management-administered public lands, and we are concerned about mounting pressures that could result in the development and fragmentation of these lands. Barring responsive action by the BLM, many large landscapes could cease being able to support the abundant fish and wildlife populations that have been restored and maintained over the past century.

More than 40 million acres of public lands are leased for oil and gas development, and millions more could host wind and solar energy development. Energy development – both traditional and renewable – is affecting high quality fish and wildlife habitat and hunting and angling across the West. While America must develop our domestic energy resources, we also must conserve important public lands, sustain valuable fish and wildlife habitat and uphold outdoor opportunities and the economies they support.

Motorized routes, both authorized and illicit, also are proliferating on public lands. Scientific research leaves no doubt that unfragmented and unroaded landscapes provide secure habitat for numerous wildlife species such as mule deer, elk and sage grouse. These lands also provide cool, clean water critical to maintaining wild trout populations. The construction of new roads and increased human activity associated with roads can negatively impact fish and wildlife to unacceptable levels.

We respectfully request that the BLM act promptly and meaningfully to conserve intact and unfragmented BLM-administered public lands across the West. Doing so will benefit both fish and wildlife habitat and the long-term sustainability of the West's fish and wildlife populations.

Sincerely,

New Mexico Chapter of The Wildlife Society
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Representing 150 Professional Fish and Wildlife Biologists

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