

From: Parker, Dave DaveParker@mt.gov
Subject: Governor Bullock, Secretary Jewell, Western Governors Announce Sage Grouse Does Not Warrant Listing on Endangered Species Act
Date: September 22, 2015 at 8:01 AM
To: Wessler, Mike MWessler@mt.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2015

September 22,

CONTACTS:

Dave Parker, Communications Director, 444.9844
Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, 444.9725

Governor Bullock, Secretary Jewell, Western Governors Announce Sage Grouse Does Not Warrant Listing on Endangered Species Act

Denver, CO.—Governor Steve Bullock today joined Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and other western governors to announce that the US Department of Interior has decided the Greater Sage-grouse does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act. The decision ensures that states will continue to oversee management of the bird.

“Today’s announcement is good for our state, our economy, and this iconic bird. Montana’s Sage-grouse management plan is the right path forward in a state where 60 percent of the bird’s habitat is privately owned,” Bullock said. “This decision shows that when Montanans from diverse viewpoints put aside their differences, and focus on addressing a challenge, we can accomplish great things for our state.”

The announcement comes in large part as a result of intense work by Bullock and the Montanans he worked with to improve state management of the bird. In the first weeks of his term, Bullock issued an executive order to establish the Greater Sage-grouse Advisory Council, which he tasked to create a statewide management plan for the bird. Through the council, Bullock brought together diverse stakeholders on this issue including representatives from conservation, sportsmen, energy development, agriculture and ranching, tribes, local governments and the legislature.

He subsequently worked with a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in the 2015 legislative session to secure funding for the management plan crafted by the Council. The US Fish and Wildlife Service used this plan to consider whether federal protection of the bird would be necessary.

“Today’s decision is good for the Greater Sage-grouse, for the West and for our nation. I thank Governor Bullock for his valuable leadership. Montana evaluated Wyoming’s model and crafted a plan that meets the needs of its birds and its economy, custom and culture,” said Gov. Matt Mead of Wyoming. “Governor Bullock’s commitment to preserving the Greater Sage-grouse and its habitat in Montana and other western states helped make today possible.”

Montanans heralded today’s decision and Bullock’s leadership:

“This decision respects private property rights, and ensures that Montana ranchers, farmers, and landowners will continue to have a voice in the management of this bird,” said Errol Rice, Executive Vice President of the Montana Stockgrowers Association. “I want to commend Governor Bullock for his efforts in securing this decision, and ensuring that all stakeholders were heard in developing Montana’s management plan.”

“Today’s announcement is confirmation that Montana’s Sage-grouse conservation program is on the right track. Using a science-based approach, the state will now act to conserve sage-grouse habitat in an effort to bolster this bird’s populations across Montana,” said Janet Ellis, Senior Director of Policy for Montana Audubon. “I thank Governor Bullock for stepping up to the plate to bring diverse viewpoints to the table to focus on a solution that is in the best interest of Montana and this iconic bird.”

“We appreciate the efforts and leadership from Governor Bullock to ensure that management of the Sage-grouse remains in state hands,” said Dave Galt, Executive Director of the Montana Petroleum Association. “The decision today recognizes the strength of Montana’s efforts to protect Sage-grouse and is a victory for Montana’s private landowners as well as our economic opportunities and quality of life.”

"Over the last few years, Montanans from all walks of life have worked together to protect sage-grouse habitat on public and private land," said Dave Chadwick, Executive Director of the Montana Wildlife Federation. "Today's decision demonstrates that when we roll up our sleeves and put aside politics, we can preserve both Montana's wildlife and our working farms and ranches. Now we need to dedicate ourselves to fully implementing these protections and recovering this important species for future generations."

###

Dave Parker

Director of Communications

Office of Montana Governor Steve Bullock

o. 406.444.9844 | c. 406.475.2521 | t. @GovernorBullock | f. Governor Steve Bullock