

August 18, 2014

Tim Wigley  
Western Energy Alliance  
410 17<sup>th</sup> St #700  
Denver CO, 80202

Dear Mr. Wigley,

We write to express our appreciation for the attention paid by the Western Energy Alliance (WEA) to the successful conservation and management of the Greater Sage Grouse (GrSG). While we clearly do not agree on everything, it seems we find common ground in seeking federal and state-level plans that strike a balance between needed energy development and lasting conservation of GrSG and its habitat in a concerted effort to prevent the need to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act.

However, as organizations passionate about conservation and environmental issues, we must take issue with your over-generalization that 'environmental lawyers' are trying to shut down the west's economy through the courts. Groups like ours are working diligently throughout the west imploring all stakeholders to come to the table to achieve a workable range-wide plan that protects existing rights, allows for needed new development, promotes other compatible uses, and commits to conservation protections sufficient to avoid the necessity of the GrSG being federally listed.

We share your belief that this is an achievable goal, but we feel strongly that the best path forward to achieving this goal is to genuinely collaborate with interested stakeholders, even those we might not always agree with. Leading companies, including several of your members, and other stakeholders did just that when they came to the table in Wyoming to hammer out a conservation plan that, while certainly not perfect, was undoubtedly a step in the right direction.

Like so many issues the west continues to face, real solutions come by hard work, collaboration and compromise. We are faced with an unprecedented opportunity to find a path forward that not only conserves the GrSG and prevents a listing, but shows that diverse stakeholders can rise above the politics of an election cycle and find solutions that work for westerners. It is our sincere hope WEA will participate in this effort by constructively working with all stakeholders including federal, state, and local governments and agencies to find a path forward.

Sincerely,

Brian Rutledge  
Vice President, Policy Adviser Central Flyway  
National Audubon Society

Nada Culver  
Senior Director, Agency Policy & Planning  
The Wilderness Society

Bobby McEnaney  
Senior Deputy Director, Western Lands and Renewable Project  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Kate Zimmerman  
Public Lands Policy Director  
National Wildlife Federation

CC: Jack Eckstrom, Co-Chairman, Board of Directors

Deb Love  
Senior Vice President, Western Division Director  
Trust for Public Land

Bill Midcap  
Director of External Affairs  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Maite Arce  
President and CEO  
Hispanic Access Foundation

Ross Lane  
Director  
Western Values Project

Rod Torrez  
Director  
HECHO

Jessica Goad  
Advocacy Director  
Center for Western Priorities