



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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### Memorandum

To: Martha Williams  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Karen E. Mouritsen  
California State Director

Jon Raby  
Nevada State Director

Subject: Continued Commitments and Assurances to Implement Formalized Conservation Efforts for the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse

This memorandum reaffirms the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) commitment to continue implementing formalized conservation efforts for the Bi-State distinct population segment (DPS) of the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). We continue to be actively engaged in the collaborative conservation partnership embodied by the Bi-State Local Area Working Group (LAWG) and remain firmly committed to working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and our other Federal, State, local and private partners, to cooperatively fund and implement the Bi-State Action Plan.

### *Funding*

Our commitment to strategic implementation of the Bi-State Action Plan has been, and continues to be, a high priority for our field units in California and Nevada. Since 2014, we have directed over \$6.5 million (~ \$650,000 annually) as well as acquiring additional funding from a wide range of special initiatives to further increase our overall implementation capabilities. As members of the Bi-State Executive Oversight Committee and signatories to the Bi-State Action Plan, we remain steadfast in our commitment to provide the annual funding (~ \$650,000 per year) needed to implement the Bi-State Action Plan over the next 10-years and ensure the long-term conservation of the Bi-State DPS.

### *Action Plan Update and Execution*

The BLM played a key leadership role in the development of the 2012 Bi-State Action Plan and has reprised this role as Bi-State partners actively work to develop the 2024 Bi-State Action Plan. The 2012 Plan was exceptionally effective, and we expect the same for the 2024 Plan. BLM efforts, along with the other partners in the LAWG, have resulted in almost 90% of the actions in the 2012 Plan being implemented. Recent analysis from USGS has also shown that this work led to an overall 37% increase in population success across the Bi-State to date, helping to stabilize the population trends.

We remain dedicated to use a data-driven, science-based adaptive management approach to ensure that we continue to focus our conservation efforts on actions that will effectively ameliorate identified threats to the DPS.

### *Coordination*

In 2019, the BLM field units in California and Nevada renewed their Service First Agreement with the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office and the Humboldt Toiyabe and Inyo National Forests. This agreement continues an interagency framework for sharing field level staff, resources, and programs across agency jurisdictional boundaries. It has also provided additional assurances for successful implementation of the Bi-State Action Plan for the foreseeable future. Key to implementing the Action Plan is the Bi-State Sage-Grouse Data and Communications Coordinator position. The BLM and other Bi-State EOC partners have jointly committed to continue funding this position to support effective communication and cooperation across the diversity of agencies and private individuals that make up the LAWG. The BLM has also established agreements with our partners at the U.S. Geological Survey that have substantially increased our capacity to assess the effectiveness of, and prioritize, actions in the 2012 Action Plan and will continue as we implement the forthcoming 2024 Action Plan.

### *Regulatory Mechanisms*

The BLM has amended Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to ensure that adequate regulatory mechanisms are in place to conserve and restore habitat on public lands throughout the range of the DPS now and into the future. In Nevada, the land use plan amendments for the Carson City and Tonopah RMPs were completed in 2016 to provide updated land use plan guidance specifically focused on the conservation and enhancement of important habitats for the Bi-State DPS. They also ensure consistency across jurisdictional boundaries, augmenting the regulatory soundness and proven effectiveness of the Bishop RMP in California.

We understand that the Service faces a complex and difficult decision as it completes the court mandated status review of the Bi-State DPS. However, we also remain confident that the demonstrated interagency coordination and commitment to implement the Bi-State Action Plan, as well as with the high level of support from the Bi-State LAWG, provides a level of collaboration and conservation certainty that is difficult to achieve once a species is listed.

If we can provide any additional information that may be useful in your status review, please have your staff contact the appropriate field office. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding the commitments and assurances articulated above, please contact us.

Cc:

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Alan Jenne, Director, Nevada Department of Wildlife

Paul Souza, Regional Director, USFWS, Pacific Southwest Region

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