



June 19, 2013

The Honorable Tom Udall  
U.S. Senator  
110 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jim Inhofe  
U.S. Senator  
205 Russell Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Udall and Inhofe:

On behalf of the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), we write to express our support and appreciation for your efforts on the proposed listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken. Your bipartisan letter requesting the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to extend the public comment period for an additional six months and to temporarily delay a final listing decision of the LPC is timely and much needed. We are grateful to see such interest in this issue from you and your colleagues from the five states that would be affected by a proposed listing.

We do not believe a listing is warranted at this time. The FWS cannot conclude that the LPC is “likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range” when there is evidence to suggest that the species population may be increasing, or at least stabilizing in portions of its range, and that its range may be extending. The evidence shows the LPC occupied range increased 159% between 1980 and 2007 to a total of more than 16,700 square miles. Additionally, relevant data shows the range-wide LPC population grew over 40% over the last decade.

We agree with you in that the FWS must incorporate the Range-Wide Conservation Plan into their analysis and proposed rule and that an additional six months to account for public input is warranted. The additional time is also critical to ensure that the results of the 2013 Range-wide Survey are included. The 2013 survey, when compared to the 2012 survey, will allow the first direct and accurate population trend analysis to be conducted for the LPC across its known range. We also agree with your recommendation to include the evaluation of Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances to ensure these agreements are not understated.

Your leadership on this issue is timely and we applaud your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Milito". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E".

Erik Milito  
API

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Naatz". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large "D" and "N".

Dan Naatz  
IPAA

Cc:

Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)

Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO)

Sen. Michael Bennett (D-CO)

Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS)

Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)