



US Oil & Gas Association  
ADVOCATE FOR THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY  
Since 1917



June 15, 2015

The Honorable Mike Lee  
316 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 2015

Dear Senator Lee,

We are writing to express our support for your amendment (# 1687) to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) regarding the status of the Greater Sage-Grouse and Lesser Prairie Chicken under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The amendment would protect the ability of the Armed Forces to utilize their training facilities while preserving the appropriate state lead role in conserving the two species.

As you know, the ESA is one of the most powerful environmental laws ever enacted. Among other things, actions driven by its deadlines for petition review and listing decisions often thwart legitimate state efforts to conserve the species under their jurisdiction. Oil and natural gas producers have worked cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and states to ensure that energy production co-exists with species conservation. Producers routinely take actions that protect species and ensure impact is mitigated. However, often listing decisions are made based on environmental group lawsuits and not the real needs of species, and arbitrary deadlines imposed through the courts can interfere with and frustrate state conservation efforts.

In the case of the Greater Sage-Grouse and Lesser Prairie Chicken, states have developed comprehensive conservation plans in concert with many other stakeholders. Your amendment would sensibly allow the states time to implement those plans before FWS is required or authorized to make a decision about what additional measures, if any, may need to be imposed upon the States to conserve the two species.

Thank you for offering this important amendment. We support this amendment and look forward to working with you to secure its inclusion into the NDAA.

Sincerely,

Dan Naatz  
IPAA

Albert Modiano  
USOGA

Erik Milito  
API

Kathleen Sgamma  
WEA