From: Dan Ashe
To: Mike Phillips (TESF-Bozeman)
Cc: Gary_Frazer@fws.gov; Sen.Bradley.Hamlett@mt.gov; connell4sd43@yaoo.com
Subject: Re: Montana"s Greater Sage Grouse Stewardship Act
Date: Sunday, March 08, 2015 7:43:31 PM

Thanks very much Mike. We are working hard toward our shared goal: Conserving the greater sage grouse, such that ESA listing is not necessary. Very good progress from BLM and USFS planning, and the state plans. Down to the wire, we really need a strong plan from Montana. Thanks to you and your colleagues for supporting the governor.

Dan.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

> On Feb 24, 2015, at 7:24 PM, Mike Phillips (TESF-Bozeman) <Mike.Phillips@tedturner.com> wrote:
>
> Dan, Gary:
>
> I want relay that the Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Act (Senate Bill 261, attached) just passed an important early vote in the State Senate and is gaining momentum for ultimate passage to Governor Bullock. The same is true for another bill (Montana's House Bill 2) that includes ~ $11M for implementation of the stewardship program. Governor Bullock has advocated for both and is excited about passing them into state law.
>
> I mention this as support for the claim that enactment of a comprehensive and operational sage-grouse conservation program by Montana should help facilitate a decision by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to not list the species under the ESA.
>
> That said, I recognize that if other states do not develop such programs listing may be indicated. If that situation does arise, given Montana's obvious commitment to the species and the presence of a reasonably secure population here, it seems that a DPS approach to listing could be used that would exclude ESA application to our state.
>
> Much credit for Montana's progress with the greater sage-grouse goes to State Senators Brady Hamlett (the principal sponsor of SB 261) and Pat Connell (co-sponsor of SB 261). Both are copied here.
>
> I think I can speak on their behalf when I say that we would be honored to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to improve the future for the species without invoking the protective provisions of the ESA in Montana.
>
> Feel free to call if you have any questions.
>
> Mike
>
> Mike Phillips
> Executive Director
> Turner Endangered Species Fund
> 1123 Research Drive
> Bozeman, Montana 59718
> p 406.556.8500
> c 406.599.5857
> e mike.phillips@retranches.com

>
> State Senator
> District 31
> 9 West Arnold
> Bozeman, Montana 59715
> p 406.599.5857
> www.tesf.org
>
> <SB 261.pdf>