



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
United States Department of Agriculture
US FOREST SERVICE



SEP 15 2015

In Reply Refer To:
PP-IDSOUTHWESTMT-GRSG-15-12
1617.2 (210) P

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

The Honorable CL “Butch” Otter
Governor of Idaho
State Capitol
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Otter:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have carefully reviewed and considered your letter, dated June 29, 2015, regarding the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement. As the BLM Deputy Director for Operations and the USFS National Forest System Deputy Chief, we are delegated the authority to review and resolve all protests related to Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Revisions and Amendments and associated Final Environmental Impact Statements. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of our review.

As outlined in the Dear Reader Letter for the proposed plan, the planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2 describe the requirements for filing a valid protest. We find that you meet these requirements, in part, and therefore portions of your protest letter are considered valid protest issues. We have determined that your letter also included comments, opinions, or observations which were not substantiated with a concise statement of why the proposed decision is believed to be wrong; issues not previously raised in the planning process; and/or issues not germane to the planning process. As such, your protest is dismissed in part. Your valid protest issue(s) are addressed in the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service Protest Resolution Report.

After careful review of your protest letter, and for reasons more fully set forth in the Protest Resolution Report, we conclude that the BLM and USFS followed the applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input in developing the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement. There is no basis for changing the Amendment as a result of your protest. Therefore, your protest is denied in part. All valid protest issues received on this Amendment have been addressed in the Protest Resolution Report, incorporated by reference herein, which is posted for public review at: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/protest_resolution.html.

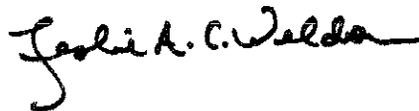
This completes our review. For BLM, this is the final agency action for the Department of the Interior on the concerns raised in your letter. At the time the BLM issues a decision to take an action that implements this plan, any party to a case adversely affected by that decision may appeal such decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. For the Forest Service, this is the final Forest Service action under the BLM protest process on the concerns raised in your letter. Any actions taken to implement the Forest Service Greater Sage-Grouse Amendments will be subject to the applicable level of the Forest Service administrative review process, commensurate to the type of NEPA conducted.

Thank you for your interest in your public lands. We encourage you to become involved as the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement is implemented. If you have any questions or would like to request a copy of the Protest Resolution Report, please contact Tim Murphy, BLM Idaho State Director, at (208) 373-4001 or 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709, or Ms. Jamie Connell, BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director, at (406) 896-5012 or 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, Montana 59101.

Sincerely,



Steve Ellis
Deputy Director for Operations
Bureau of Land Management



Leslie Weldon
Deputy Chief
National Forest System
U.S. Forest Service