

**Alaska Wilderness League * American Bird Conservancy
Center for Biological Diversity * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice
Grand Canyon Trust * GreenLatinos * League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres Forest Watch * National Parks Conservation Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation * Natural Resources Defense Council
Partnership for the National Trails System * Sierra Club
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society * Wilderness Workshop**

March 3, 2017

Dear Senator,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to object to H.J. Res. 44 the Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution to rescind the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Planning 2.0 regulation. This resolution is an extreme response to a sensible and overdue rule. It will also unnecessarily tie the hands of the new Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke. Without the CRA the Secretary will have the ability to address any shortcoming in the plan through the administrative process. If, however the CRA is taken up and passed, the accompanying ban on substantially similar rules in the future will complicate any response and or update to BLM planning. We urge you to weigh in with leadership to refrain from bringing up the resolution and to **Vote NO on H.J. Res. 44**, if it does come to the floor.

H.J. Res. 44 would invalidate a new, collaborative, science-based approach to land use planning that boosts public engagement, improves administrative efficiency, and increases responsiveness in planning on our largest public land system. It allows managers to move beyond an outdated 30 year-old process to better address pressing challenges posed by critical issues, such as wildfire, invasive species and increased demand for domestic energy. More specifically, this new guidance:

- **Increases efficiency and public participation in planning.** The BLM rule will save taxpayer dollars, shorten planning times, and avoid disputes by investing time upfront to collaborate with locals and stakeholders on prospective management strategies. Public voices will help develop plans with improved opportunities for participation, new electronic options for submitting input, and updated processes for filing plan protests—improving the likelihood that the plans meet Americans' broad array of conservation and resource needs.
- **Preserves priority status for local government in planning.** The new rule carefully preserves a priority role for local government and other cooperators in BLM planning processes as directed by Congress, ensuring that final plans consider local and regional perspectives and priorities.
- **Increases transparency in planning.** The rule will prevent closed door decision making between the BLM and special interests by updating guidance that provides the American people the ability to participate in the planning process at all stages.
- **Improves science-based decision making in planning.** High quality data will be a foundation for BLM planning and management. Planning 2.0 will incorporate current science, geospatial data and technology to evaluate landscapes at the regional level. These changes will enable faster response to today's environmental, economic and social realities

with new evaluation markers and agency flexibility to plan across traditional administrative boundaries, keeping our lands great places to hike, hunt, and fish.

- **Supports sporting pursuits on BLM lands.** Hunters and anglers support Planning 2.0 because the rule takes steps to ensure that important habitats, such as migration corridors and other intact habitats, are identified early in the planning process so these important areas can be managed and conserved as the agency makes decisions about other public land uses.

Overturning this common sense rule will relegate hundreds of millions of acres of public lands to planning under an out-of-date rule that has not been substantially changed since 1983. The public will lose opportunities to participate in how these public lands—owned by all Americans—should be managed. Without the new rule, public land management will continue to be contentious, inefficient and costly.

Finally, if the rule is struck down by the CRA, Secretary Zinke would be prohibited from issuing a similar rule in the future, preventing the agency from modernizing its land use planning regulation to adequately address contemporary issues like energy development, grazing, wildlife, mining, conservation, recreation, cultural resources protection or any of the many multiple uses that occur on our public lands. This significantly limits Secretary's options for addressing planning on BLM lands without giving him a chance to address any concerns through the normal channels.

Planning 2.0 is a sensible and much needed rule that updates an antiquated process that limited management decisions to outdated concepts of resource planning, and instead creates a framework to support more inclusive, comprehensive planning and management on our public lands. We urge you to stand up to protect the new planning rule and the Secretary of the Interior's ability to manage these public lands as needed going forward. Again, we urge you to ask senate leadership to refrain from bringing up the resolution and to **Vote NO on H.J. Res. 44**, if it comes to the floor.

Sincerely,

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