



April 21, 2015

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gardner:

Thank you for introducing the *Sage Grouse Protection and Conservation Act*, which empowers states to continue managing Greater Sage-Grouse and providing them time to show the Fish & Wildlife Service that their conservation efforts are effective. The Act is a common-sense way to ensure the protection of the species without harming the western economy and job creation.

States effectively manage sage-grouse populations and should retain management authority for the species. States already have or are currently developing viable conservation plans that protect sage-grouse by using a bottom-up process with input from diverse stakeholders. These plans provide a sensible and adaptive approach to managing the species based on local conditions, while allowing responsible economic activities to occur.

We support requiring sage-grouse management on federal lands to conform to state plans. As you are aware, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service are currently updating nearly one hundred federal land management plans across the range of the species with very restrictive measures for sage grouse. Many of the measures in these plan amendments do not balance conservation with continued economic activity, are unnecessarily restrictive, lack proper scientific justification, and are not tailored to local conditions. Western Energy Alliance along with a coalition of western counties and ranching, mining and energy organizations are challenging the poor science the agencies are using to make sage grouse decisions.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue, which is weighing heavily on Westerners. Western Energy Alliance and its members stand ready to support you in advancing this legislation and sustaining state-level oversight of sage-grouse conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Sgamma", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kathleen M. Sgamma
Vice President of Government & Public Affairs