

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Bureau of Land Management – Rock Springs Field Office
Rock Springs, Wyoming
July 22-23, 2014

Comments from U.S. Legislators



Cynthia M. Lummis
Congress of the United States
Wyoming

July 21, 2014

Mr. Don Simpson
Chairman
Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative
280 Highway 191 N
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Dear Chairman Simpson,

Thank you for inviting me to join you for the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative's (WLCI) Executive Committee meeting. I regret that my schedule prevents me from seeing you all in person.

The WLCI's goal of balancing conservation with responsible development in Southwest Wyoming is a laudable objective and not without its challenges. There are fewer parts of the country where land-use needs are so complex and resource interests so diverse. Competing land and resource needs and differing opinions on how to resolve tension are inevitable, which makes WLCI's model of bringing strong local voices to a collaborative table so important. Throughout my time in Washington, I have been a strong supporter of the goals of the WLCI model and believe it should be replicated elsewhere.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on a couple of issues I am working on right now in Washington. I still have my sights set on reforming the Endangered Species Act, whose rigid, litigation-driven regulatory model has fallen behind our nation's capability to conserve and recover species. Less than two percent of listed species are actually recovered to the point that they make it off the list. We can do better, both at recovering species and in ways that do not automatically conflict with the needs of our people. Wyoming is a leader on species conservation, from the wolf to the grizzly bear and now the sage grouse. Unfortunately, our state is also an example of how litigation is driving the law when our focus should really be on boots-on-the-ground conservation.

To help make the ESA work better for both species and people, I co-chair the House Endangered Species Act Working Group and we have written four pieces of legislation currently working their way through the House of Representatives. These bills offer common sense, targeted reforms to increase the transparency of ESA litigation and science, and to elevate the role of states in the decision-making process. These bills are only the first steps towards what I hope will be broader reform of the ESA to bring the law into the 21st Century.

I continue to work on public land access and management of our resources for the enjoyment of future generations. I introduced with Representative Tim Walz from Minnesota the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act of 2014 to improve the management of volunteers and improve trail maintenance. While the National Forest System helps fuel a \$646 billion recreation industry, and public land use remains high, only one-fourth of the Forest Service's trails meet the agency's standards for maintenance. The Trails Act presents a reasonable remedy to the System's long overdue needs by increasing partnerships with volunteer organizations, nonprofit groups and recreation outfitters.

Proper public land management requires balance. Wyoming understands this relationship between use and protection and I continue working to ensure that same balance is reflected in the public lands policies we enact here in Washington. As we consider larger reauthorizations next Congress, like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the management issues of federal land ownership will also be part of the discussion. PILT payments, pest management, habitat recovery and wildfire prevention are all costs the federal government bears for owning 48 percent of Wyoming's lands. I look forward to hearing from the WLCI, as you all lead the way in meaningful dialogue between land managers, land owners, and permittees.

I hope your time together is productive. Please feel free to call me, or drop by my office anytime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia M. Lummis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Cynthia M. Lummis
Member of Congress

CML/pa

Talking points from Senator Enzi

Congress is working to reauthorize the surface highway transportation program, which expires this year. In May, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee marked up their portion of the bill. You may be interested to know that it maintains funding for core programs in Wyoming as well as measures that will help speed up infrastructure projects while ensuring that environmental and public health consideration are given proper review.

Congress will also need to approve an appropriations package, including funds for important conservation measures, before the end of the year. Unfortunately, instead of considering individual appropriations bills, the Senate Majority is once again bundling several appropriations bills into one giant package and not allowing amendments. This is the wrong way to do appropriations, and only makes it harder to control spending and ensure that government programs are working efficiently and effectively.

Green, Reagen (Enzi)

From: Munoz, Darrin (Enzi)
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2014 12:15 PM
To: Green, Reagen (Enzi)
Subject: RE: Invite to WLCI EC meeting July 22-24

Not much to update on the Sportsmen bill other than Leader Reid killed it, but here are some if you need them as well as some provisions that were in the bill that they may care about. That doesn't mean MBE supported those provisions, but they were in the bill nonetheless.

- Senator Enzi was looking forward to debating the Bipartisan Sportsmen's bill which included provisions that increased access for hunting and fishing while at the same time supported habitat conservation. Unfortunately, the Senate majority leader decided to block dozens of amendments from both Democrats and Republicans from being considered as part of the bill and it died in a procedural vote.
- Senator Enzi also supported numerous amendments that were bipartisan, but the majority leader is insisting on making decisions for the 99 other senators on what ideas should get votes and what shouldn't.

Some of the issues they may care about in the bill included:

- **Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) Reauthorization** – led by Senators Heinrich and Heller, and cosponsored by Senators Baucus, Bennet, Crapo, Tester, Mark Udall, Tom Udall, and Wyden. This bill reauthorizes FLTFA, a western lands program that facilitates strategic Bureau of Land Management land sales that provide funding for high-priority land conservation within or adjacent to federal lands in the eleven contiguous western states and Alaska. FLTFA provides critical habitat protection and additional public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation.
- **North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Reauthorization:** led by Senator Vitter and sponsored by 15 others, this bill will reauthorize through Fiscal Year 2019 a critical matching grants program for local and state governments and organizations to maintain migratory bird habitat.
- **Making Public Lands Public:** allows for 1.5% or \$10 million of annual Land and Water Conservation Fund funding to improve public recreational access to public lands.
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Reauthorization:** led by Senator Boxer and cosponsored by others, this bill will reauthorize through fiscal year 2019 this quasi-governmental entity that disburses important sportsmen and conservation matching grants since its establishment in 1984.

From: Green, Reagen (Enzi)
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2014 1:11 PM
To: Munoz, Darrin (Enzi)
Subject: RE: Invite to WLCI EC meeting July 22-24



Statement Itqo Senator Barrasso-

Senator Barrasso appreciates the work WLCI is doing, and the partnerships the teams are developing. Senator Barrasso continues to support WLCI and defends public lands, multiple use and water rights. He supports energy production, infrastructure development, and to expedite liquid natural gas exports to America's allies.

There is work being done, but several pieces of legislation from committees the Senator is on would benefit programs like WLCI that come to the Senate Floor only to be denied. The Senate Energy committee passed two water bills for BOR Transparency Act and BOR Conduit Hydropower Development Equity and Jobs Act. Unfortunately they did not pass through the Senate Floor.

He joined Senators Thune and Heitkamp in sending a bipartisan letter to Secretary Vilsack requesting implementation of the Livestock Forage Disaster Program in the 2014 Farm Bill.