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January 30, 2017

The Honorable Speaker Ryan
H-232
The Capitol
Washington D.C., 20515

RE: BLM's Final Rule on Resource Management Planning (RIN: 1004-AE39)

Dear Speaker Ryan:

On behalf of the members of the Western States Land Commissioners Association (WSLCA), I would like to express our support for the use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to repeal an unnecessarily burdensome regulation finalized during the Obama Administration: the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Final Rule on Resource Management Planning which is more commonly referred to as "Planning 2.0" (RIN: 1004-AE39). We respectfully request that the House allow floor consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval of this rule. Many of our member states share a direct interest in how the BLM plans to manage federal lands because our lands are comingled and we were involved in state-federal coordination under the previous planning process.

WSLCA is led by the land commissioners of 23 states, which together manage over 440 million acres of land, mineral properties, submerged lands, and water resources. WSLCA members manage lands and natural resources under constitutional mandates to generate income for the benefit of K-12 public education and to support other public purposes provided by state law. Last year the benefit of WSLCA member states land management practices was over \$3.8 billion provided for education and endowed institutions.

Our revenue depends on the leasing of lands for agricultural purposes, mineral development, and investments. BLM's planning change directly impacts our ability to generate revenue from lands comingled across several western states. This rule inadequately considers the impacts on the respective states and the impact on the management of constitutionally granted state trust lands.

WSLCA submitted comments with several pages of concerns during the public comment period on the proposed rule, and on January 11th, 2017 passed the enclosed resolution urging the rule be vacated. We seek the development of a modern rule consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and congressional intent, and offer an ability to work with state trust land managers to craft provisions to streamline resource management planning in a way that honors states' rights and addresses the many deficiencies in the Final Rule. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brent Goodrum".

Brent Goodrum, President
Western States Land Commissioners Association

cc: Rob Bishop (UT), chair – House Committee on Natural Resources
Lisa Murkowski (AL), chair – Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Enclosure



RESOLUTION 2017-03
EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT'S
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING RULE (PLANNING 2.0)

Whereas, the Western States Land Commissioners Association (WSLCA) and its member states manage over 440 million acres of public trust lands, minerals and waterways that are interspersed with federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and

Whereas, members of WSLCA have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands and waterways for economic development, public education, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, planning and management decisions made by the BLM have significant impacts on WSLCA members' ability to effectively manage trust assets for their constitutional beneficiaries; and

Whereas, the BLM has issued a Final Rule entitled "Resource Management Planning" popularly known as Planning 2.0 on November 22, 2016 that amends the BLM's established land use planning procedures; and

Whereas, the BLM must conduct federal land use planning and management under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 pursuant to the Congressional mandate of multiple use and sustained yield and must coordinate planning and management with state and local governments; and

Whereas, the Final Rule fails to respect and follow the Congressional mandate requiring the BLM to consider and coordinate with State Governments, and to the extent practical, resolve inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government land planning; and

Whereas, many state land management agencies are often separate entities from a state governor with unique state constitutional powers and should automatically be granted cooperating agency status and additionally should be provided with "early public notice of proposed decisions which may have a significant impact on non-Federal lands"; and

Whereas, the Final Rule significantly reduces the role of State and local governments in federal land planning, inventory, and management decisions by granting equal status to any commenting entity—regardless of their connectivity or proximity to the federal lands; and

Whereas, the Final Rule pushes federal land planning, inventory, and management decisions further from local BLM managers creating centralized decision making by BLM political appointees located in Washington DC; and

Whereas, the Final Rule would implement landscape-level resource management plans, crossing multiple state and local government jurisdictions, which greatly inhibits the BLM’s ability to craft management strategies consistent with state and local land planning as required by FLPMA; and

Whereas, the Final Rule enacts through regulation the President’s mitigation policy and attempts to justify the Department of Interior’s recent landscape planning scheme in regard to species management across 10 states and impacting over 165 million acres of land in the name of Greater sage grouse protections; and

Whereas, the Final Rule neglects to address the BLM’s failure for decades to satisfy and respect the land grants to states to support funding of critical state government functions and constitutionally granted beneficiaries, primarily K-12 public education; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the WSLCA does hereby oppose the Planning 2.0 Rule and urges the BLM to vacate the Rule and issue a new planning rule that is within the authorities granted by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, congressional intent, and work with state trust land managers to craft provisions to streamline resource management planning in a way that honors states’ rights and addresses the many deficiencies in the Final Rule.

Adopted this 11th day of January, 2017.


_____, President
Western States Land Commissioners
Association


_____, Secretary
Western States Land Commissioners
Association