

Sagebrush Ecosystem Council

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STATE OF NEVADA

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August 18, 2023

Mr. Craig Aubrey
Chief, Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Ms. Carey Galst
Support Chief, Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Re: Request for Extension of Public Comment Period for Proposed Revisions to Endangered Species Act Regulations

Dear Mr. Aubrey and Ms. Galst:

On behalf of the Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program (SEP) and the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council (SEC), I respectfully request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) grant a 60-day extension of the public comment period for each of the three Endangered Species Act (ESA) proposed regulations published in the Federal Register on June 22, 2023.

The Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary program overseen by a governor-appointed Sagebrush Ecosystem Council, established to protect and enhance the sagebrush landscape. A focus of the Program is to mitigate and restore habitat in collaboration with our federal and state partners to prevent a listing of the Greater Sage Grouse. The potential impacts of these proposed regulations are complex and must be vetted through by the SEC and/or its collaborative members to determine the implications of such on the future of the Program and our efforts.

Currently, the comment period for all three proposed rules is scheduled to close on August 21, 2023. The SEC respectfully requests that the USFWS extend the public comment period for each of these ESA proposed rules for an additional 60 days, until October 23, 2023. We additionally request that the Service notify the public on the decision for this extension well in advance to allow for the Program to adequately adjust based on the decision.

We hope to hear from you soon regarding our request for a 60-day extension. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris MacKenzie

Chairman, Sagebrush Ecosystem Council