

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

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STATE OF NEVADA
Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT
MEETING DATE: June 12, 2015

DATE: June 2, 2015
TO: Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Members
FROM: Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team
Telephone: 775-684-8600
THROUGH: Kacey KC, Program Manager
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SUBJECT: Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement (LUPA/FEIS)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to provide the Council with a summary of the identified differences in the LUPA/FEIS and the 2014 Nevada Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan (State Plan).

PREVIOUS ACTION

July 30, 2013. The Council adopted the Sagebrush Ecosystem Strategic Detailed Timeline, which included review of the DEIS.

November 18, 2013. The Council directed the SETT to compile comments on the DEIS and submit them on behalf of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program for the State.

December 18, 2013. The Council discussed possible comments to be developed on specific sections of the DEIS.

January 8, 2014. The Council discussed draft comments on the DEIS submitted by the SETT and directed the SETT to develop a cover letter to accompany the comments.

January 24, 2014. The Council submitted comments on the DEIS to the BLM and USFS.

May 14, 2015. The Council discussed the upcoming release of the FEIS and were interested in the differences with the State Plan and the preferred alternative.

DISCUSSION

The SETT spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the Final plan. We focused primarily on the differences between the FEIS and the State Plan. The substantive differences are as follows:

- Preferred alternative does not provide for exclusive use or endorsement of the State's CCS, and allows for development of other mitigation options(pg 2-26).
- Land use allocations that include exclusion concepts (eg ROW exclusion solar, NSO)
- Habitat Objectives Tables (Table 2-2- BLM; Tables 2-5 & 2-6- USFS): (pgs 2-18 to 2-19; 2-57 to 2-60)
- Creation of a 3% disturbance cap (pg 2-20 to 2-22)
- Creation of Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs) and the associated management allocations and prioritization of conservation actions (pg 2-2 to 2-3; 2-25; Management Allocations
 - Requesting mineral withdrawals (pg 2-45)
 - NSO without waiver, exception, or modification for fluid mineral leasingConservation Actions
 - The methods for the delineation of SFAs are not outlined or readily available.
 - The prioritization process for conservation actions should look at multiple factors not just this spatial delineation.
- No mitigation requirement in Other Habitat Management Areas (OHMAs)/ State General habitat (pg 2-25)
- Livestock section:
 - Grazing season management primarily by utilization levels
- Minimum or average stubble height requirement for livestock grazing (Table 2-8; pg 2-40, 2-66, 2-99)
- Road closures in high traffic volume roads (pg 2-71)
- Adaptive management hard and soft triggers and the associated management responses (section 2.7 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND MITIGATION)
- Map update process may have to occur through land use plan amendment (pg 2-85 to 2-86)

POSSIBLE MOTION

“Motion to authorize Sagebrush Ecosystem Council protest.”

And/or

“Motion to recommend the Governor address the issues as put forward by the SEC in the Governor's consistency review period.”