



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington DC, 20004



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/DCC/BLPS/079623

Craig MacKenzie
Chairman
Sagebrush Ecosystem Council
Sagebrush Ecosystem Program
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Craig MacKenzie,

We received your August 18, 2023, request to extend the comment periods for three proposed rules to revise Endangered Species Act (ESA) implementing regulations, which were published on June 22, 2023. We appreciate your interest in these regulations and share your desire to ensure that your constituents and all members of the public have adequate time for review.

However, the public comment periods have closed. For the following reasons, we find the 60-day comment period provides sufficient time for a thorough review of the proposed revisions. The majority of the proposed revisions are to portions of the regulations that were previously revised in 2019, and we publicly announced our intentions to revise these regulations in June of 2021. Additionally, we opened a 60-day comment period on each rule, rather than the customary 30-day comment period, to provide sufficient time for review and comment. We received over 130,000 comments on each proposed rule, indicating that members of the public are aware of the proposed rules and have had adequate time to review. In addition, our staff provided seven informational sessions for a wide variety of audiences. Over 500 attendees participated in these sessions, and we addressed questions from the participants as part of the sessions. Finally, on our website we provided additional information about the regulations, such as frequently asked questions and a prerecorded presentation on the proposed revisions (<https://fws.gov/project/endangered-species-act-regulation-revisions>).

Thank you for your interest in our ESA regulation revisions.

Sincerely,

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Gary Frazer
Assistant Director, Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service