

Sagebrush Ecosystem Council

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April 30, 2024

Jon Raby, State Director
Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office
1340 Financial Blvd.
Reno, NV 89502

Dear Mr. Raby:

Prior to our December 2023 meeting, it was asked of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) if the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Council (SEC) could participate in NEPA discussions as a Cooperating Agency (CA). However, the BLM indicated that the SEC could not be considered CAs due to the perception that the SEC is an Advisory Council without regulatory or management authority. It was explained that, according to the BLM, entities without such authority do not meet the definition of Cooperating Agencies.

We very much appreciate the BLM for their collaboration and cooperation with the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program (SEP) in addressing the challenges facing the sagebrush biome. It is commendable to see both agencies working together to find solutions to protect and preserve this treasured asset. Additionally, your presence and input during our meetings have been invaluable.

However, while we appreciate the BLM's willingness to collaborate with the SEC on matters concerning the sagebrush ecosystem, it is crucial for the BLM to recognize and respect the regulatory responsibilities of the SEC. As we discussed at a recent meeting, the SEC is more than just an advisory council; it is a regulatory body empowered to make decisions and enforce established regulations to protect and preserve Nevada's sagebrush ecosystem. We respectfully ask for the opportunity to be included as a Cooperating Agency on all EIS-level actions that affect Greater Sage-Grouse habitat within Nevada.

If there is concern regarding the confidentiality of the discussions, there is a provision to the Open Meeting Law - NRS 241.028 - that provides for a public body to hold a closed session to allow for the sharing of confidential information provided under the National Environmental Policy Act process.

We very much appreciate the BLM's continued active involvement in the SEC, as it is, obviously, a crucial component to safeguard critical habitat and promote long-term health and sustainability thereof.

Sincerely,


Chris MacKenzie

Chairman, Sagebrush Ecosystem Council