

Heather Foster

From: SHERI ROEN <sproen@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2020 10:47 AM
To: Heather Foster
Subject: Fwd: Request for Input on Potential Grazing Legislation

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Starr, Shane" <Shane.Starr@mail.house.gov>
Date: February 5, 2020 at 1:45:14 PM PST
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Subject: Request for Input on Potential Grazing Legislation

Hello all,

We have become aware of a bill that has been introduced in the House by Rep. Adam Smith of Washington. This [BILL](#), the Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement Act, would make the retirement of grazing allotments much easier. We have already seen the promotion of this bill by Sierra Club, Wild Earth Guardians, and other groups, and the likelihood of it passing through the House is pretty good; Though we believe it will not make it through the Senate. Take a moment to read this article on the proposed legislation.

<https://www.kuer.org/post/proposed-law-would-make-it-easier-remove-livestock-public-lands#stream/0>

As you are aware, Congressman LaMalfa has been steadfast in the protection of grazing allotment rights, and has continued to work with the USFS and BLM to improve conditions and availability of allotments. Doug, along with his staff, will be working to educate our counterparts in the House and Senate to kill this bill.

In the meantime, we are asking for input for possible legislation that would help improve availability of allotments to the livestock industry. One proposal we are looking at would be to extend the life of permits from 10 to 20 years which could alleviate some of the NEPA backlog we currently see with the USFS and BLM. We are open to other ideas as well.

Any feedback you have would be greatly appreciated, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Shane

Shane Starr | District Representative

Congressman Doug LaMalfa (CA-01) | www.lamalfa.house.gov

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SIERRA COUNTY

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February 18, 2020

Congressman Adam Smith
2264 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith,

On behalf of the Sierra County Board of Supervisors, I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments as well as express our sincere opposition to H.R. 5737- Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement Act. As you are aware agriculture is a vital component of the economic engine in western rural counties. Often in many rural western counties it is the primary foundation of the economy altogether. It is also critical to outline the importance of livestock grazing in the context of both private land and lands managed by the federal government. Currently, the Bureau of Land Management administers over 18,000 livestock grazing permits and the U.S. Forest Service administers over 6,500 livestock grazing permits in 16 western states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming). The importance of livestock grazing on federal lands is increasingly critical when the state's overall land base contains a high percentage of federal land. This is especially evident in the western United States where federal ownership is disproportionately higher than many other regions of the United States. The following percentages of federal land per state outline the significance; Nevada - 85% federal land, Utah - 65% federal land, Idaho - 62% federal land, Oregon - 53% federal land, Wyoming - 48% federal land, and California - 57% federal land.

The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are both agencies which adhere to multiple use mandates as required by federal law and direction by Congress. It is also important to note that livestock grazing is a component of these two agencies mandates. Livestock grazing on federal lands is authorized by the respective U.S. Forest Service's Land and Resource Management Plan as well as the Bureau of Land Management's Resource Management Plan. These aforementioned plans and individual allotment management plans adhere to mitigation measures and best management practices, which provide for maintaining the viability of wildlife, plants, and aquatic species and reduces fire fuel loading. In addition, livestock grazing on federal lands must adhere and comply with the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. All livestock grazing on federal lands are managed by federal agencies in order to maintain and enhance the rangeland environment and to maintain the viability of all species. Proponents and supporters of H.R. 5737 have failed to state the complex requirements of which livestock permittees must adhere to as part of their respective permit and provide alternative management procedures to achieve the same positive outcomes once livestock are gone.

As stated earlier, livestock grazing is a vital part of the economic engine in most rural western counties. The loss of any grazing permittees represents a significant loss to the tax revenue needed to maintain county services, schools, and roads. Specifically, a loss of any livestock grazing permittee on any federal grazing allotment results in critical county revenue loss (possessory interest tax - livestock & allotment value). As with many of the ranches in the rural western United States, there is often an alignment with the overall productivity and viability that is based upon a dependency on a federal grazing permit. As we have witnessed firsthand throughout many counties, when livestock numbers are reduced significantly, or when an allotment is cancelled...the base ranch operations struggle to maintain an existence. Often, the base ranch is sold or fragmented and the private land is developed. The end result is a housing subdivision which removes the critical value of wildlife, fisheries and native plant habitats. As you are aware this is a common theme in the western United States and especially detrimental within states that have a high predominance of federal land.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and express Sierra County's opposition to H.R. 5737.

Sincerely,

Jim Beard
Chairman
Board of Supervisors

cc: Congressman Doug LaMalfa
State Senator Brian Dahle
State Assemblymember Megan Dahle
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RCRC

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