

SPORTSMEN FOR **Responsible Energy Development**

April 9, 2014

Sally Jewell, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

As business owners who provide products, services and experiences to hunters and anglers or enjoy the benefits of local economies bolstered by hunting, fishing and recreation, our businesses absolutely depend on healthy sustainable populations of fish and wildlife on our nation's public lands. Outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, and energy development on our public lands need not be mutually exclusive. A commitment to balancing energy development with outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, and water resources is essential.

Hunting and fishing in America is big business, generating more than \$90 billion in economic activity in 2011 and supporting more than 1.5 million jobs (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and National Shooting Sports Foundation) in the United States. That expenditure would rank them at 24th on the Fortune 500 list, ahead of companies such as Kroger and Costco. Each sportsman and woman spends an average of \$2,407 per year. In 2011, 47.7 million people hunted or fished in America. That's more than the population of the State of California, Wyoming, North Dakota, Alaska, Montana, Idaho, New Mexico and Nevada combined and the numbers are rising. In 2011 the number of hunters increased by 9 percent and anglers by 11 percent, demonstrating that the economic benefits of hunting and fishing will continue as long as our lands and waters remain healthy enough to support abundant fish and wildlife.

Public lands are a big part of the sporting and outdoor recreation economy. Fiscal year 2010 saw more than 58 million visitors to lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, with a resulting benefit of \$7.4 billion dollars to the economy. In 2012, national forest lands hosted 160 million visitors and generated \$11 billion in recreation related spending. The bottom line is that hunting and fishing are sustainable bedrock pillars of the economy, particularly for the small, rural communities that hunters and anglers visit as well as for businesses like ours that provide the equipment and services used by sportsmen and women.

We believe it is essential that public lands be managed for multiple uses in a way that sustains America's outdoor recreation-based economy, water resources, sportsmen's access, and fish and wildlife populations. We ask for your strong leadership in

implementing the following recommendations as a part of your vision for responsible energy development of energy on public lands.

1. The reforms to the onshore oil and gas program announced by DOI in 2010 represent positive steps in restoring recognition of the fish and wildlife values on public lands. These reforms have stalled, and sportsmen need to see a renewed effort by the DOI to fully implement them. In particular, Master Leasing Plans (MLPs) could provide a new and powerful opportunity to avoid and minimize wildlife and other environmental conflicts.
2. We support responsible, well-planned development of our nation's renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar. We also strongly support legislation in Congress to ensure the orderly development of wind and solar energy on public lands while also protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitat. We encourage the Administration to support these bills, H.R.596 and S. 279.
3. BLM's draft rule on fracking was a step in the right direction, but it needs to go further. We strongly urge you to ensure that full disclosure of the chemical composition of fracking fluids is required for development and that robust well integrity standards are developed for gas and shale development, and to finalize the rule in the near term
4. In 2010 the BLM developed an Instruction Memorandum (IM) to clarify the appropriate use of categorical exclusions for activities related to oil and gas projects. This IM was invalidated on procedural grounds. New policy is needed to clarify how categorical exclusions will be used by the DOI in a way that does not interfere with the balance of energy production and the protection of important fish and wildlife habitats.

Our businesses depend on the quality of the fish and wildlife habitats on our public lands. With your significant experience in the recreation industry, we are looking forward to working with you and your staff to stake out a path forward that balances all the vital uses on our public lands.

Sincerely,

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