



May 10, 2019

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop:

The Public Lands Council (PLC), the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), and the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) strongly oppose H.R. 2532, the Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who hold federal grazing permits and operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's oldest and largest national marketing and trade association representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property. ASI is the national trade organization representing the interests of over 90,000 sheep ranchers located throughout the country who produce America's lamb and wool.

This legislation would harm rural communities throughout the American West by placing unnecessary and burdensome restrictions on grizzly bear management. The species is currently protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), however grizzlies have made an impressive recovery in the contiguous United States since receiving ESA protection in 1975. In fact, the species' listed status is currently pending review across several distinct population segments (DPS). Most recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the best available scientific and commercial data supports delisting grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem DPS (82 Fed. Reg. 30502).

The Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act is a waste of limited federal resources while the grizzly bear remains protected under the ESA. Furthermore, when the USFWS determines that the species has fully recovered across the entirety of its range, this legislation undermines the authority of state wildlife agencies, who are entitled to primary management jurisdiction over non-listed entities. Enacting this legislation would be an egregious usurpation of the states' rights to manage wildlife in a manner conducive to species conservation, public safety, and changing conditions on the ground.

This bill also unjustly targets the ranching community. Section 3(e) would require the cancellation of grazing permits if a permit-holder is convicted of grizzly bear take in violation of the misguided provisions laid out in the legislation—further demonstrating its redundancy and narrow scope. Laws are already in place to govern those rare occurrences where grazing permit-holders are convicted of federal crimes. The addition of superfluous, targeted judicial ramifications to these longstanding statutes is an aggressive overstep and misuse of legislative authority.

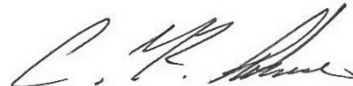
H.R. 2532 represents the worst form of federal interference in local affairs. At a time when rural communities are struggling to balance species conservation with the safety and security of their residents, it is appalling that certain members of the Committee are content to cast those legitimate concerns by the wayside to placate radicals whose livelihoods and wellbeing are not threatened by predatory grizzly bears. Rural America deserves better.

PLC, NCBA, and ASI appreciate the opportunity to provide input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. We strongly urge your opposition to H.R. 2532, the Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act.

Sincerely,



Ethan Lane
Sr. Executive Director/Executive Director
NCBA Federal Lands/Public Lands Council



Chase Adams
Sr. Policy & Information Director
American Sheep Industry Association