



CREATION JUSTICE MINISTRIES

Justice for God's planet and God's people.

Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240

Neil Kornze
Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240

August 19, 2015

Dear President Obama, Secretary Jewell, and Director Kornze,

We write to you as members of the faith community in an effort to fulfill God's call to be stewards of creation and to protect life. Throughout the Bible, there are references to protecting the lives of animals. In the story of Genesis, God created animals of every kind and blessed them, saying "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth" (Gen 1:22). Again in Genesis, we learn of Noah, who was charged by God to be a caretaker of creatures and instructed to build an ark to safeguard all species.

In this spirit of Noah, we call upon state and federal leaders to protect the sage grouse habitat and ensure a safe and fruitful future for the greater sage grouse. We have a moral obligation to care for the animals of this earth and safeguard critical eco-systems including that of the sage grouse for future generations.

Our communities in the West host sage grouse habitat. This habitat is vital to not only the greater sage grouse, but also to a large and diverse array of other creatures. In total, over 350 species depend on this habitat including pronghorn sheep, mule deer, elk, and golden eagles. We believe that the Bureau of Land Management, the steward for the greatest area of sagebrush habitat, should finalize their sage-grouse management plans based upon the best available science.

Our faith communities value a flourishing habitat that allows humans and animals alike to seek benefits from creation. Many people of faith express a divine connection when out in nature and many of us know the transformative power of having access to God's creation. Many people of faith are hikers, birdwatchers, and outdoor enthusiasts. We understand that the preservation of this habitat is a blessing to the creatures, but also to many Westerners who call this place home.

The Bible states: "In wisdom you made them all, the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm 104:24), and in wisdom we can protect God's creatures. Please join us in this important task of protecting God's creatures, employing the best available science to not only preserve the sage grouse habitat, but also to enhance it so that the greater sage grouse may flourish.

We will keep you in our prayers as you serve in your important roles of stewardship, and thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Rev. Peter Erickson

Director, Montana Association of Christians
Columbia Falls, MT

Adrian Miller

Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches
Denver, CO

Elizabeth Sholes

Director of Public Policy for California Council of Churches IMPACT
Sacramento, CA

Jan Elfers

Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Portland, OR

Jenny Holmes

Director, Environmental Ministries, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Portland, OR

Chesie Lee

Executive Director, Wyoming Association of Churches
Laramie, WY

Rev. Tonya Eza

Secretary & Chair of Sacred Ground Team, Wyoming Association of Churches
Powell, WY

Rev. Mike Patterson

Director, Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy in Nevada
Sparks, NV

Rev. Peter Sawtell

Director, Eco-Justice Ministries
Denver, CO

Rev. Dr. Marc Ian Stewart

Conference Minister, Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference United Church of Christ
Billings MT

Ty Markham

Co-Chair, Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance
Salt Lake City, UT

Bishop Bruce R. Ough

Dakotas-Minnesota Area, The United Methodist Church
Minneapolis, MN

Mark Carlson

Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California
Sacramento, CA

The Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin

Bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Los Angeles, CA

Bishop Martin Wells

Easter Washington-Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Spokane, WA

Bishop David B. Zellmer

South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Sioux Falls, SD

Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke

Oregon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Portland, OR

Bishop Warren Brown

California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church
West Sacramento, CA

Rev. Dr. Ruth A. Fletcher

Montana Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Great Falls, MT

Elder Joan Jeffers

Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Nevada

Reno, NV

Rev. Diane Weible

Conference Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ

Hayward, CA