

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO
SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S
SAGE GROUSE CONSERVATION PLAN**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Kevin T. Van Tassell

House Sponsor: Scott D. Sandall

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature, the Governor concurring therein, urges Congress to support the state's sage-grouse conservation plan.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ urges Congress to provide no funding to the United States Secretary of the Interior to consider, prepare, write, or issue a petition finding or proposed regulation for greater sage-grouse management through fiscal year 2025;
- ▶ resolves that the state implement its sage-grouse conservation plan; and
- ▶ urges Congress to enact legislation recognizing and encouraging state primacy in the long-term management of sage-grouse and its habitat.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, the state of Utah is committed to the conservation of greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) and its present habitat located within the state;

WHEREAS, the state of Utah has produced a statewide sage-grouse conservation plan



28 in support of this commitment;

29 WHEREAS, the Division of Wildlife Resources in the Department of Natural
30 Resources possesses significant expertise in the management of greater sage-grouse and its
31 habitat, and experts in the division have been working extensively in full cooperation with the
32 federal agencies managing federal lands within the borders of the state;

33 WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act requires the United States Secretary of the
34 Interior to take into account the state of Utah's efforts to protect greater sage-grouse prior to the
35 Secretary's determination that the species is endangered or threatened;

36 WHEREAS, implementation of the state's conservation plan will produce scientific data
37 related to disease or predation of the species, the adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms,
38 and other natural or human-influenced factors affecting the species' existence, all of which
39 must be considered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in making a determination
40 whether to list greater sage-grouse as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species
41 Act;

42 WHEREAS, categorical exclusions from the National Environmental Policy Act are
43 necessary to allow the federal land management agencies to remove pinyon-juniper trees that
44 are harmful to greater sage-grouse habitat;

45 WHEREAS, the state of Utah wishes to continue its collaboration with other states
46 possessing current habitat for greater sage-grouse;

47 WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the President of the United States are to be
48 commended for recognizing the unprecedented collaboration among the various states
49 regarding greater sage-grouse conservation and the need to continue on-the-ground
50 conservation and monitoring activities, as recognized through the enactment of Section 122 of
51 the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015; and

52 WHEREAS, time is needed to finalize and implement the state conservation plan over a
53 period of multiple, consecutive sage-grouse life cycles to determine the efficacy of the plan and
54 the need for modification, if any:

55 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
56 Governor concurring therein, urges Congress to provide no funding to the United States
57 Secretary of the Interior to consider, prepare, write, or issue, pursuant to Section 4 of the
58 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1533), a petition finding or proposed

59 regulation for greater sage-grouse for a period of 10 years through and including fiscal year
60 2025.

61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that during this period, the state of Utah will implement
62 its sage-grouse conservation plan, thereby establishing and enhancing its efficacy over time.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor
64 concurring therein, urges Congress to enact legislation recognizing and encouraging state
65 primacy in the long-term management of sage-grouse and its habitat to ensure an effective and
66 balanced approach that seeks to recover and protect sage-grouse populations while protecting
67 state economic interests, educational funding from state lands, and valid existing rights,
68 including private property rights.

Legislative Review Note
as of 1-30-15 2:08 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel