

Utah Cattlemen's Association



Congressman Rob Bishop:

"Serving Ranchers Since 1890"

On behalf of the officers and membership of the Utah Cattlemen's Association, I would like to thank you for your leadership and efforts in the United States Congress to protect the integrity of the livestock industry in Utah and throughout the western United States. In addition, we thank you for the opportunity to give written input of our priority issues as you set into motion congressional activities that relate to public land usage.

As a board of directors of the cattlemen's association, we have discussed the request sent forth in your letter dated February 15, 2013. We have reached out to ranchers throughout the state to get their input. As you can understand, there are various issues and priorities throughout the state as individual circumstances dictate grazers' concerns. Below is a list of the common priorities that came from the discussions with Utah ranchers.

1. The Utah Cattlemen's Association has long held the policy that there is no need for additional wilderness areas, or special protective designations of lands, within our state. With existing land use polices and current science, there are plenty of ways to protect the lands, while allowing multiple use to continue on the lands without special land use designations.
2. Wilderness Study Areas throughout the west are being managed in ways that are often more restrictive or unpredictable than a designated wilderness area. There needs to be a system of resolution and a release of these lands back to multiple use management.
3. Continued access to public lands grazing, under economically feasible management policy, is critical to rural economies throughout our state and the west.
4. The blocking of scattered sections of land ownership meets with differing points of view throughout the state. While in some instances, the blocking of lands does create more management opportunity; in others it removes the flexibility of the grazer. Often, the federal land management agency will not allow an improvement practice, where the adjacent private or state owned property does. Grazers frequently rely on this checkerboard system of land to access or manage land within a grazing allotment.
5. If there are discussions of land trades or blocking of lands, there must be adequate opportunity for local decision making, and must include the impacted grazing permittees. Trading a grazing permit between state and federal agencies has multiple impacts.
6. The Endangered Species Act needs a critical revision.
7. The NEPA process and the grazing permit renewal process need revisions.

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8. Wild horse, wild burro and wildlife issues need to be resolved. Grazers continue to express concern that the resources cannot continue to be abused by wildlife and wild horses. The federal agencies need to recognize their overriding charter of protecting the rangeland resources and not continually give into special interest groups that seek an increase of one species at the expense of the resources. The federal agencies must establish a functional system of management that is not always contested and stopped in the courts.
9. The federal government needs to recognize and respect that water rights are governed and protected under state water rights and laws.
10. There is a great concern among ranchers that competing uses of the federal lands are taking precedent over grazing rights. These uses include, wind and solar development, energy exploration, recreation and many other multiple uses of the land. While we strongly believe in, and support, the concept of multiple use, the increase of any of these uses on the land, tends to take away the rights of the permitted grazer. There needs to be a better way to assess and address the impact of one use on another permitted use.
11. Revisions need to be made in all land management agencies to provide for a more feasible access to develop and maintain management improvements.
12. The Antiquities Act must be changed or repealed to provide for long term certainty of land use management against political posturing.
13. Additional attention and funding needs to be given to the impact of predators on federal lands. Not only the impact of predators on livestock, but also the impact they have on threatened and endangered species.
14. There needs to be a better system for holding federal agency personnel accountable for decision making that impact a permitted right.
15. The Utah Cattlemen's Association continues to monitor and support the concepts of states resuming more control over federal lands within our western states. As that movement continues, we encourage the concepts of local decision making and local control over management. We are cautiously concerned that grazing rights must be protected in any future action.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to be involved with the federal land management process. We look forward to being engaged in the process as you proceed. Please feel free to contact the Utah Cattlemen's Association if you have questions about this letter or for input as you move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wallace Schulthess". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wallace Schulthess,

President