

# NEWS RELEASE



**National Cattlemen's  
Beef Association**

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### **Cattlemen Urge Federal Land Management Officials to Work With Ranchers**

NASHVILLE, TENN. (Feb. 4, 2012) – The proposed forest planning rule and efforts to prevent sage grouse from being listed on the Endangered Species list were among the topics discussed during the Federal Lands Policy Committee of the [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA), which met Fri., Feb. 3, 2012, at the 2012 Cattle Industry Convention. Committee chairman Joe Guild, who is a rancher from Nevada, said the issues discussed at the meeting will have long-term impacts public lands ranching.

“NCBA has repeatedly raised concerns to the U.S. Forest Service about the detrimental impacts its proposed forest planning rule would have on federal lands ranching,” Guild said. “Once again, cattlemen urged the Forest Service to walk away from the proposed forest planning rule and to work with us on a plan to manage the land and its resources while sustaining a productive ranching industry.”

Jim Peña, U.S. Forest Service associate deputy chief, told cattlemen he expects the forest planning rule to be finalized in less than a month. The proposed rule will set management requirements for the 155 forests and 20 grasslands that constitute the National Forest System. Guild said the proposal is unworkable and shifts the focus from multiple-use to non-use and preservation. Specifically, Guild said cattlemen oppose the requirement to “maintain viable populations of species of conservation concern.” He said there is no scientific consensus on what level of any given population is viable or how it is to be managed.

In December 2011, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service released a plan to implement sage grouse protections into land use and resource management plans on 45 million acres of federal lands with the goal of preventing the listing of sage grouse on the Endangered Species list. Guild said while the intent to prevent the bird's listing is a worthy goal, NCBA and other livestock groups must stay engaged to ensure that the agencies' plan is workable for ranchers and does not unduly prohibit livestock grazing. He said NCBA will submit comments on the scoping period for the plan before the current deadline of Feb. 16, 2012.

“Well managed grazing is the primary tool for managing federal lands. We are the solution,” Guild said. “When you quintuple the sage grouse population in 20 years through grazing, you cannot say we are the problem. We urge the agencies to listen to our concerns, work with us on issues and help us sustain this industry for future generations.”