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**PLC, Livestock Groups Say Secretarial Order May Threaten Grazing**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 16, 2010) -Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, on Nov. 15, 2010, signed a Secretarial Order elevating the Office of the National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the level of a directorate within BLM. In response to the Secretarial Order (the Order), the [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC); [American Sheep Industry Association](#) (ASI); [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA); and 19 other livestock groups sent a [letter](#) to Secretary Salazar, voicing their concern that the Order could threaten livestock grazing on BLM lands.

The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) was codified in the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 in order to “conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes.” It consists of approximately 10 million acres of national monuments, national conservation areas, and other specially designated BLM lands. By merit of statute, livestock grazing occurs on much of NLCS land. According to PLC president John Falen, the laws mandating grazing on NLCS lands are not given due consideration in the Order.

“The Order says multiple uses such as grazing *may* be allowed, as long as they are not ‘in conflict’ with the ‘values for which [NLCS components] were designated’,” said Falen. “That leaves a lot of room for litigious environmental groups to claim that grazing is ‘in conflict’ with conservation—even though well-managed grazing is documented to actually promote healthy ranges. In fact, grazing on federal lands keeps many ranching families in business, which is critical in preserving vast open spaces. We are a vital part of the conservation effort, not a burden to it.”

Steve Foglesong, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, expressed concern regarding the possibility of expansion of the NLCS portfolio.

“The Secretary stated that NLCS is a ‘successful model for our nation.’ If NLCS continues to grow, managed under the concepts put forth in the Order, we have a lot of questions about the direction it will take the BLM, whose mission is based on management for multiple use,” said Foglesong. “Our members need assurance that they will continue as part of a vibrant, working landscape.”

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