

May 31, 2011

The Honorable John Barrasso  
U.S. Senate  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act of 2011**

Dear Senator Barrasso:

The Public Lands Council, American Sheep Industry Association, Association of National Grasslands, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and undersigned livestock groups strongly support the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act of 2011.

For too long, our members, federal lands ranchers, have been forced to operate—or cease to operate—under prohibitive restrictions that were intended for wilderness areas, but are being enforced on study areas and roadless areas that have been expressly recommended for release from consideration as wilderness by federal land management agencies. The result has been a loss of grazing permitted on these lands, which has harmed rural economies and put some ranching families out of business. Additionally, resources on Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) are suffering due to the prohibition of appropriate on-the-ground stewardship. Your bill would remedy this mismanagement of federal lands, returning them to responsible and balanced multiple use management, with local stakeholder input.

Furthermore, your legislation would ensure that these WSAs and IRAs, once released, will not be considered for designation as Wild Lands under Secretarial Order 3310 (the Wild Lands Order). This Order appears to be an attempt by the administration to create wilderness areas—an act reserved solely by Congress. By preventing the designation of released WSAs and IRAs as “wild lands”, your legislation would safeguard those lands from falling back into the hands-off “management” status under which they have languished for years.

Multiple use and responsible resource management on released WSAs and IRAs is good for ranchers, good for communities, and good for the range. In these hard economic times, your legislation is the kind of solution we need. We greatly appreciate your efforts to bring about these long-awaited changes.

Sincerely,

Public Lands Council  
American Sheep Industry Association  
Association of National Grasslands  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Arizona Cattle Growers' Association

California Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Wool Growers Association  
Idaho Cattlemen's Association  
Idaho Wool Growers Association  
Montana Association of State Grazing Districts  
Montana Public Lands Council  
Montana Stockgrowers Association  
New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association  
New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.  
North Dakota Stockmen's Association  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association  
Utah Wool Growers Association  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

Cc: Sens. Jeff Bingaman, Lisa Murkowski, Ron Wyden