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**Livestock Groups Encouraged by Interior Secretary's Refocus on Secretarial Order**

**— Secretary Must Not Bypass Congress**

WASHINGTON (June 1, 2011) – The Department of the Interior today, June 1, 2011, released a [memo](#) sent from DOI Secretary Ken Salazar to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Bob Abbey regarding the future of Secretarial Order 3310 (the Order). Dustin Van Liew, Public Lands Council (PLC) executive director and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) director of federal lands said while he is relieved Secretary Salazar recognized that the agency would not be permitted to designate any lands as "Wild Lands" this fiscal year due to a funding prohibition passed by Congress, he emphasized that the agency would be developing recommendations regarding the management of BLM lands with "wilderness characteristics," and "soliciting input" for nominations of BLM lands as congressionally designated wilderness.

"We are glad that the Secretary acknowledges that DOI must defer to Congress when it comes to special land designations. We just hope that he recognizes that statutorily this requirement should extend beyond fiscal year 2011," he said. "But federal lands ranchers are concerned that Secretary Salazar seems intent on finding ways around Congress."

Van Liew explained that while the BLM has the responsibility of inventorying the multiple use characteristics of the land it manages, the agency does not have the statutory authority to elevate "wilderness characteristics" over other multiple use values when making land management decisions, which would be the result of the Order.

"Our worry is that, in calling for an inventory of lands that may merely have *some* 'wilderness characteristics,' the agency will subject itself to litigation if those newly inventoried areas are not managed as though they are actual wilderness," Van Liew said. "More litigation ties up resources. It isn't good for the agency or our members and it certainly isn't good for the land."

He said this shift would have negative consequences on federal lands grazing and other multiple-use activities and added that federal lands ranchers hope the administration will totally back away from this "unnecessary and burdensome" regulation.

"We already have the processes in place to designate wilderness and to determine how to balance multiple uses on non-wilderness lands. The Order was not only unnecessary, but a threat to multiple use and our members' way of life," he said. "Going forward all decisions should be made from a multiple-use standpoint. If true congressional wilderness designations are to be made, consent of local stakeholders – including ranchers – is imperative."