

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mary Geiger, 202-879-9138 or [mgeiger@beef.org](mailto:mgeiger@beef.org)

## **Secretarial Order May Jeopardize Livestock Grazing on BLM Lands**

WASHINGTON (Jan. 18, 2010) - The [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC), [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA), the [American Sheep Industry Association](#) and 20 other livestock groups today, Jan. 18, 2011, sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar expressing concerns regarding the Secretarial Order 3310 (the Order), issued on Dec. 23, 2010, titled, "Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)."

The Order directs the BLM to designate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as "Wild Lands" and to manage them to protect their wilderness values. According to the letter, the organizations that signed represent an industry that accounts for 18,000 grazing permits on 157 million BLM acres. PLC Executive Director and NCBA Director of Federal Lands Dustin Van Liew said that shifting the focus from multiple uses to management for wilderness characteristics presents a threat to activities such as livestock grazing.

"The benefits of well-managed grazing to sustainable rangeland health and to wildlife habitat are well documented. While the intention of the Order may be to protect BLM lands, we are concerned it will actually have multiple negative effects on the very land the federal government is proposing the Order would protect," Van Liew said. "When ranchers graze livestock on BLM lands, not only do they manage the natural resources for the public but they also take on a responsibility to manage noxious weeds, wildfire risks and vandalism on that land. That is a responsibility they take very seriously."

At this time, Van Liew said BLM is working to promulgate guidance on the Order and is collecting comments from state and regional BLM offices. Van Liew said PLC, NCBA and the organizations that signed the letter are working with members of Congress to verify whether the order is consistent with current law.

"The loss of federal grazing allotments due to placing wilderness characteristics above other multiple uses will have many, far-reaching negative effects. The western economy, landscape and culture rely on a thriving public lands ranching industry. We are concerned the Order threatens ranchers' ability to sustain their operations, and in turn, threatens western communities dependent on our industry," Van Liew said. "We are hopeful BLM will address our concerns and work with us on this issue to ensure that livestock grazing and other multiple uses on BLM land continue."

###

*The Public Lands Council (PLC) has represented livestock ranchers who use public lands since 1968, preserving the natural resources and unique heritage of the West. Public land ranchers own nearly 120 million acres of the most productive private land and manage vast areas of public land, accounting for critical wildlife habitat and the nation's natural resources. PLC works to maintain a stable business environment in which livestock producers can conserve the West and feed the nation and world.*