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## Attorney General Laxalt Joins Broad Nevada Coalition Challenging Federal Sage Grouse Land-Use Restrictions

**Carson City, NV** – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt joined a suit on behalf of the state of Nevada challenging the federal government's greater sage-grouse land-use plan. In ten western states including Nevada, the federal plan withdraws more than ten million acres of federal land from public use. In Nevada alone, mineral exploration and development is barred on nearly three million acres. Additionally, the plan may result in significant restrictions on livestock grazing, resource development and public access on over sixteen million acres of public land in Nevada.

"The federal government's one-size-fits-all sage-grouse plan will greatly hinder Nevada's growth and success, and have an adverse impact on Nevada's economy, affecting ranchers, mining exploration, new energy source development, recreation and everyone who works in these industries," said Laxalt. "While I appreciate and applaud all of the efforts that have been made to negotiate a favorable outcome for Nevada, and continue to hope that ongoing negotiations may result in a better plan for Nevada, my office, after careful legal analysis, has concluded that this suit is necessary to fully protect the interest of the state."

Senator Dean Heller added, "As I said before, the final greater sage-grouse land-use plans are not a win for Nevada—new restrictions on over sixteen million acres in our state alone pose a threat to our western way of life. I support efforts to stop these unnecessary regulations in their tracks and allow rural Nevada to thrive economically."

Congressman Mark Amodei stated, "For 150 years, Nevadans have lived with decisions made from thousands of miles away in Washington, D.C. Nobody else does it this way–not at the local and state levels and not at the federal level for much of the nation. The sage hen resource management plans are based on political maneuvers where the last consideration seems to be multiple use in the West. The result is a nearly three million

acre exclusion zone because the Interior officials in D.C. do not have to live with their rulings the way Northern Nevadans do. When the Department of the Interior completely ignores input from Nevada's Environmental Impact Statement, I believe no tool should be left in the shed, and one of those tools is litigation."

Before the federal government adopted its final plan last month, Nevada developed a State Plan that focuses on the specific needs of the sage-grouse population within the state while balancing relevant economic and rural concerns, and ensuring that federal land remains available for multiple uses. The plan was developed through the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council, and received input from all stakeholders including representatives from local government, the general public, wildlife, mining, ranching, tribal nations, energy, agriculture and conservation organizations.

The federal government is required by law to adopt a plan that allows for multiple uses that is consistent with the State Plan where possible. Despite repeated efforts by state and local officials, the federal government rejected major portions of the State Plan and withdrew millions of acres from other uses.

"Those who live closest to the land are the best stewards of it," said Congressman Cresent Hardy. "This has been proven particularly true in Nevada, where locally driven conservation efforts helped keep the sage-grouse off of the endangered species list. But the federal government is actively choosing to ignore that reality. Washington should leave land management to those who need it most and who know it best."

Congressman Joe Heck added, "On the surface, the Obama Administration's decision not to list the sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species may seem like a win for Nevada. However, the land use plans BLM and the Forest Service intend to implement have created a de facto listed designation by locking up millions of acres of land in our state and across the West, greatly restricting our future economic development. This is consistent with the Obama administration's habit of disregarding solutions to local challenges developed at the state level, and instead choosing to enact its agenda through executive actions like these land-use plans. Nevadans came together and developed a plan to protect the sage-grouse and its habitat while still allowing lands to be used for economic development opportunities and recreation. Unfortunately that plan was rejected by bureaucrats at the Department of the Interior who have no connection to the land and won't have to deal with the consequences of their land-use plan. Nevada should pursue this litigation to protect our state from the negative impacts of yet another example of federal overreach."

Attorney General Laxalt continued, "Being home to the second highest population of sage-grouse, this bird has long been a part of Nevada's rural culture and history. Nevada has already demonstrated that our State Plan does a better job protecting sage-grouse than the federal plan, while also respecting the other needs of Nevadans. I am encouraged by the overwhelming support of federal, state and local government officials, together with Nevadans across our state on my decision to join this suit."

Nevada counties who have joined the lawsuit include: Churchill, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Pershing, Washoe and White Pine. Other community leaders and associations that support this action include: Senator James Settelmeyer, Senator Pete Goicoechea, Senator Don Gustavson, Assemblyman John Ellison, Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, Assemblyman Ira Hansen, County Commissioners, the Nevada Association of Counties, the National Federation of Independent Business/Nevada representing more than 2,200 small businesses throughout the state, the Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association, the Western Exploration, LLC, the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, the Nevada Cattleman's Association and the Ninety-Six Ranch.

To view Nevada's filed complaint, click here. To view the statements of those who support this action, click here.

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