

South Dakota Chapter
The Wildlife Society

Resolution in Opposition to
Legislation Affecting Public Lands

Whereas, there is pending legislation in the U.S. Congress which will affect livestock grazing and natural resource management on federal lands and;

Whereas, this legislation is currently embodied in Senate Bill 852, Senate Bill 1459, and House Resolution 1713, and;

Whereas, the proposed legislation will advance significant management changes on National Grasslands and other publicly owned lands, and;

Whereas, the proposed legislation will affect over 2.3 million acres of public land in South Dakota, in excess of 3 million acres of public land in the Great Plains and over 300 million acres of federal land in the Western United States, and;

Whereas, the proposed legislation will seriously and irreversibly affect fish and wildlife resources, their habitats and outdoor enthusiasts use of these public lands by:

- C Exempting National Grasslands or other federal lands, wholly or in part, from existing conservation law such as the National Environmental Policy Act, Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act, Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act, and/or the National Forest Management Act:
- C Shifting the principle emphasis of National Grasslands management from scientific resource conservation to legislative establishment of livestock grazing and private ranching interests:
- C Reducing the ability of all citizens to participate in management planning and decision making thereby conferring exclusive powers to a limited number of private livestock producers that are not available to other citizens:
- C Diminishing the ability of federal land managers and State Wildlife Agencies to provide professional and technical expertise into public land management decisions affecting wildlife and wildlife habitat:
- C Hampering educated and responsive decision making to changing environmental conditions:
- C Allowing private livestock producers to assert private property rights on public lands, and;

Whereas, the changes proposed for the National Grasslands are directed toward the nefarious benefit of livestock permittees at the expense of other users and values, and;

Whereas, professional resource managers and organizations such as the U.S. Forest Service, Wildlife Management Institute, The Wildlife Society, etc... have repeatedly voice concern with these measures and these concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed, and;

Whereas, the public land base in the Great Plains is limited in size, and;

Whereas, the public lands significantly enriches the quality of natural resource values and national, public recreational opportunities, and;

Whereas, these public lands are constantly and increasingly threatened by privatization efforts, and;

Whereas, the National Grasslands are part of a system of Public Lands that should be managed for the benefit of all citizens:

Therefore be it resolved, that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, in their annual meeting assembled on March 5, 1996, urges Congress to oppose current or any future legislation which demonstrates any of the characteristics listed in this resolution and as embodied in current versions of Senate Bill 852, Senate Bill 1459 and House Resolution 1713, and;

Be it further resolved, that should such legislation pass the Congress, The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society urges the President of the United States to veto the measure.