

**Phoonswadi-Brewer, Sean**

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**From:** Lander RMP  
**Subject:** Comments / Lander Resource Management Plan  
**Importance:** High

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**From:** Caren Cowan [mailto:nmcga@nmagriculture.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 20, 2012 4:49 PM  
**To:** BLM\_WY\_LRMP\_WYMail  
**Subject:** Comments / Lander Resource Management Plan  
**Importance:** High

On behalf of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA) with members in all 33 of the state's counties, we would like to recommend that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) follow the plan outlined in **Alternative C** in the proposed changes to the Lander Resource Management Plan (RMP). We ask that you consider both the economic as well as ecologic role that land managers can create when allowed the flexibility to oversee our valuable natural resources.

We recognize the importance of land management agencies, such as the BLM, and their contributions to federal grazing lands. It is these grazing lands that provide an economic basis for rural communities, as well as a means for our country to provide for itself. The relationship between the BLM and land managers is important because teamwork is essential to developing strategies that are efficient and mindful of federal lands. The contributions that these lands make should be recognized when the agency is deciding on what RMP to follow, which will ultimately determine the direction of the agency and how it will administer over the 2.5 million acres of surface and 2.7 million acres mineral estate in central Wyoming, which are covered by the Lander Field Office. It is our opinion that Alternatives A, B, and D hinder the ability to make proper land management decisions.

Alternative C, however, recognizes the role that active land management plays in encouraging both proper stewardship of the land and a healthy level of utilization. It provides the flexibility they need to use the natural resources available to them by maximizing the amount of use while still providing for their conservation. The biggest advantage listed in Alternative C is that it will not allow for Areas of Critical Environment Concern (ACEC), which fail to recognize the efforts of land management practices catered to promoting a healthy habitat. Alternative C acknowledges that improvements such as fences and water developments, put in place by land managers, help contribute to improving range conditions. The other alternatives listed will either limit or abolish the ability to make such contributions.

Land stewardship is a concept that has been championed in the ranching community for generations. Part of being a good steward of the land, however, rests in the ability of the land manager to make the decisions necessary to determine its use. Alternative C allows for the most flexibility, which fosters a healthy relationship between the BLM and ranchers that is essential in managing our federal lands. We need to promote proactive land management and not hinder the ability of ranchers to make daily decisions-decisions that are a part of maintaining a healthy environment.

It should also be noted that Alternative C allows for the continuation of ranching and activities of the oil and gas industry. In a time that many Americans are struggling to find jobs, these industries have been able to provide a means for people to support themselves and their families. Little else is needed to stress the importance that these two industries have played in rural Wyoming. By limiting, or discouraging, the continuation of these two industries, local rural economies would only be hurt more.

The RMP will ultimately decide the direction of policy that the Lander Field Office will take, and we cannot stress how important it is to make the right decision. Please consider the ranching families in rural Wyoming,

and the role they play in promoting a stronger economy and healthy environment. We urge you to choose Alternative C for the RMP. Thank you for your consideration of our comments and concerns.

Sincerely  
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