

**Mule Deer Foundation\* American Petroleum Institute\* Archery Trade Association\* Bear Trust International\* Boone and Crockett Club\* Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation\* Conservation Force\* Delta Waterfowl\* Houston Safari Club\* National Shooting Sports Foundation\* National Association of Forest Service Retirees\* National Wildlife Federation\* National Wild Turkey Federation\* North American Grouse Partnership\* Pheasants Forever/ Quail Forever\* Professional Outfitters and Guides of America\* Quality Deer Management Association\* Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation\* Ruffed Grouse Society/ American Woodcock Society\* Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership\* Whitetails Unlimited\* Wildlife Forever\* Wildlife Management Institute\* Wild Sheep Foundation**

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman, Senate Committee  
on Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee  
on Environment and Public Works  
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,

The undersigned organizations, which represent millions of sportsmen and women, conservationists and energy industry leaders respectfully request your support for Senate passage of the *Sage-Grouse and Mule Deer Habitat Conservation and Restoration Act* (S. 1417) under expedited procedures.

Introduced by Senators Orrin Hatch and Martin Heinrich, this important bipartisan legislation would direct the Bureau of Land Management to conserve and restore important sagebrush habitat from the encroachment of invasive piñon pine and juniper trees. This bill would remove duplicative and unnecessary hurdles that can currently prevent and delay these important projects. Specifically, S. 1417 would categorically exclude commonly used and previously analyzed practices for restoring and rehabilitating sagebrush habitat for the benefit of sage-grouse and mule deer from duplicative study under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that invasive piñon pine and juniper trees pose an ongoing and increasing threat to sagebrush habitat.

Encroachment of piñon pine and juniper trees results in altered habitats which are not preferred by either sage-grouse or mule deer and can alter the fire regime resulting in hotter fires which can aid the introduction of additional non-native species that threaten sage-grouse and mule deer populations throughout the Western United States. Pinon pine and juniper encroachment has altered millions of sage-grouse and mule deer habitats over the past century and without aggressive habitat restoration and rehabilitation efforts we cannot restore local sage-grouse and mule deer populations.

Restoration and rehabilitation projects have been successful in managing piñon pine and juniper tree encroachment in a manner that enhances and expands preferred grouse and deer habitat. When enacted, S.1417 will make it easier for land managers and wildlife organizations to work together to undertake significantly more projects to restore and rehabilitate sagebrush habitat and support healthy landscapes and recover important habitats for sage-grouse and mule deer.

S. 1417 enjoys the support of a diverse cross-section of sportsmen-conservation organizations, environmental non-profits, and the oil and gas industry. In addition, the legislation has far reaching bipartisan and bicameral support in both the House and Senate.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the *Sage-Grouse and Mule Deer Habitat Conservation and Restoration Act* be passed in the Senate under unanimous consent.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued service to our Nation's wildlife and habitat.

Sincerely,

Mule Deer Foundation  
American Petroleum Institute  
Archery Trade Association  
Bear Trust International  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Conservation Force  
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