



Bold action for birds  
across the Americas

March 23, 2026

Dear Senator/Representative:

Administration policies, and their combined impacts, must be considered whenever changes to the nation's environmental safety net are being debated. Plans already underway and new proposals to blindly increase fossil fuel development, mining, grazing, and logging on federal lands threaten to diminish our nation's natural heritage for future generations.

American Bird Conservancy is concerned that protections for birds and other wildlife, and their public lands' habitats, are being weakened at the same time new development mandates are being advanced. Given that bird populations are already in decline, these policy changes would likely continue or accelerate that negative trend.

These compounding threats indicate a need for stronger environmental safeguards.

The proposed rescission of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule of 2001 exemplifies our concern. The rule is underpinned by a remarkable analysis showing that the National Forest road system was not being sustainably managed, and that major environmental harm, particularly to water quality, was resulting as unmaintained roads crumbled into streams or caused catastrophic landslides.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule Final Environmental Impact Statement also found that the unroaded and unmanaged portions of the landscape had lower wildfire risks, and a higher overall ecological integrity including more biodiversity. Revoking the Roadless Rule risks a return to unsustainable logging and roadbuilding practices that would harm threatened bird species such as the Marbled Murrelet.

This concern is compounded by proposed changes to agency NEPA regulations undermining sound forest management and public participation, and plans by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to eliminate protections for old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. A 4,000-acre old growth timber sale on the Tongass National Forest in Alaska has just been proposed.

BLM is rolling back protections for Greater Sage Grouse and planning to drill one the few remaining pristine blocks of habitat, Wyoming's "Golden Triangle". And the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed numerous rules weakening the Endangered Species act (ESA), including reducing critical habitat designations needed to recover listed species; all raising further alarm.

In addition to maintaining existing safeguards under the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, and science-based land management plans such as the Northwest Forest Plan, we recommend the following:

1. The Endangered Species Act is best served by science-based listing decisions free of political interference, and a robust recovery process. An increase in funding is needed to carry out recovery projects that can boost population numbers.
2. Existing National Environmental Policy Act processes and opportunities for public involvement need to be retained, and a [mitigation requirement](#) added to better balance development with conservation.
3. Please oppose new categorical exclusions for logging included in Fix Our Forests, the House Farm Bill, and other legislation.
4. Public lands belong to all Americans. It is crucial that public involvement be retained for any decisions regarding disposal of lands, or land management plan changes prioritizing industrial development or resource extraction over continued multiple use.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. Please let us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Steve Holmer  
Vice President of Policy  
American Bird Conservancy