

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 23, 2016

Mr. Daniel Feehan  
Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Readiness)  
Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness)  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Mr. Feehan:

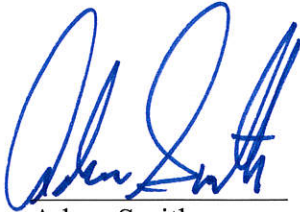
In recent years, many concerns have been raised that listing actions taken pursuant to the Endangered Species Act may adversely affect military training, operations, and readiness. This was the subject of significant discussion, specifically with respect to the greater sage grouse, during consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

In working closely with the Department of Defense and the Military Departments, we understand that actions being taken to conserve the greater sage grouse would not adversely affect military training, operations, or readiness. However, in anticipation that this may once again be an issue of discussion during upcoming consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, we write in an attempt to seek clarification from the Department. Specifically, we ask that you please provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) How would the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service Resource Management Plans, and other requirements for protection of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat, affect military training, operations, or readiness?
- 2) If the greater-sage grouse were to be listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, what affect would that decision have on military training, operations, or readiness?
- 3) How do the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) allow for both training and wildlife conservation at U.S. military installations while not adversely affecting military training, operations, or readiness?
- 4) What statutory authorities does the Department of Defense have to address potential conflicts that may arise in the future to ensure that military training, operations, and readiness will not be adversely affected? Does the Department believe these authorities are sufficient to protect the interests of the Department of Defense without additional legislation from Congress?

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and we respectfully request that you provide a response to these questions within 10 business days. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Brian Garrett on the House Armed Services Committee or Matt Strickler on the House Natural Resources Committee staff.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources