



February 29, 2016

To: Interested Parties

From: Ben Tulchin, Ben Krompak, and Kiel Brunner; Tulchin Research

Re: **Polling Finds Overwhelming Support for Protecting Gunnison Sage-Grouse Under the Endangered Species Act**

A recent Tulchin Research survey of 400 Colorado voters living in Gunnison, Montrose, Saguache, and San Miguel counties finds residents of the region strongly favor protecting the Gunnison sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act. Voters overwhelmingly agree that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s listing of these birds as “threatened” has encouraged local conservation efforts and believe that the species should continue to be protected under the Endangered Species Act until fully recovered.

**Protecting Gunnison Sage-Grouse Under the Endangered Species Act Favored by Overwhelming, Broad-Based Majority**

Our research finds that Gunnison sage-grouse are widely recognized and admired in the four-county region, with 58 percent of voters indicating they are familiar with these birds and 84 percent of those respondents indicating that they view the species favorably. Voters are also highly aware of efforts to protect Gunnison sage-grouse, with 62 percent reporting they have heard recent information about such efforts, including 23 percent who say they have heard “a lot” of information.

By a margin of more than 3-to-1, voters believe that “listing of the Gunnison sage-grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act has encouraged local efforts to conserve these birds,” with 67 percent of voters agreeing with this statement to just 20 percent who disagree and the remainder uncertain. Similarly, two-thirds of voters (66 percent) agree that “Gunnison sage-grouse should continue to be protected under the Endangered Species Act until they are fully recovered,” including 36 percent who *strongly* agree with this statement, while just 29 percent disagree.

<b><u>Voters Agree Endangered Species Protection of Gunnison Sage-grouse Is Working, Should Continue</u></b>		
<i>“Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement.”</i>	<b>Total Agree</b>	<b>Total Disagree</b>
<b>Listing of the Gunnison sage-grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act has encouraged local efforts to conserve these birds.</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Gunnison sage-grouse should continue to be protected under the Endangered Species Act until they are fully recovered.</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Notably, support for continuing Endangered Species Act protection of the Gunnison sage-grouse until the species is fully recovered extends across the region and across the political spectrum.

- Continued protection of the bird under the Endangered Species Act is backed by strong majorities of voters in all four counties, including:
  - 62 percent of voters in Gunnison County;
  - 64 percent of voters in Montrose County;
  - 65 percent of voters in Saguache County;
  - and 82 percent of voters in San Miguel County.
- Continued protection is supported by overwhelming majorities of Democrats (88% agree to 7% disagree) and independents (66% agree to 28% disagree) and by a plurality of Republicans (48% agree to 45% disagree).

### Voters Are More Likely To Support Candidates Who Back Sage-grouse Protections

By a margin of more than 2-to-1, voters say they are more likely to “vote for a candidate who supports protecting the Gunnison sage-grouse” rather than less likely. Half of all voters (50%) say they would be more likely to support such a candidate – including 23 percent who say they would be *much more* likely to support that candidate – while just 24 percent would be less likely to support that candidate.

In conclusion, our research finds that voters in the four-county region strongly back the continued protection of Gunnison sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act. Voters are widely familiar with these birds, view them favorably, and believe that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s listing of the grouse as threatened has encouraged local conservation efforts and should continue until the species is fully recovered. Additionally, voters are more likely to vote for a candidate for office who supports protecting the Gunnison sage-grouse.

**Survey Methodology:** From January 19-21, 2016, Tulchin Research conducted a telephone survey in Colorado among 400 registered voters living in Gunnison, Montrose, Saguache, and San Miguel counties. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 4.88 percentage points.

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