



PROPOSED LANGUAGE - Report Language Included in 2017 Senate Interior Appropriations Bill Regarding Bighorn Sheep and Vacant Grazing Allotments

Vacant Grazing Allotments – The Committee directs the Bureau to make vacant grazing allotments available to a holder of a grazing permit or lease when lands covered by the holder of the permit or lease are unusable because of drought or wildfire, or other condition beyond the control of the permittee.

Bighorn Sheep – The Committee directs the Service to complete Risk of Contact analyses using the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' occupied bighorn habitat maps, telemetry data, and recent bighorn observations. The Service is further directed to transparently and promptly share findings with other Federal land management agencies, State and local governments, State wildlife agencies, and State and Federal animal health professionals, including the Agricultural Research Service, permittees, and stakeholders. The Committee directs the Forest Service to engage the Agricultural Research Service and the aforementioned cooperating agencies and participants to ensure the best professional scientific understanding of where and if disease transmission occurs, and the degree of that risk, before making further management decisions that impact permittees. The Forest Service is further directed, if warranted, to use this base of information to swiftly identify and implement actions to resolve high-risk of disease transmission allotments, including if agreeable to the permittee, the relocation of domestic sheep to lower-risk allotments, with minimal disruption and displacement of permittees. The Forest Service is directed to provide bi-annual briefings to the Committee on its progress and adherence to the directives contained herein. Additionally, the Forest Service is directed to make vacant grazing lots available to a holder of a grazing permit or lease when lands covered by the holder of the permit or lease are unusable because of drought, wildfire, or agency action beyond the permittee's control.