

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 8-9, 2023

**6. GREATER SAGE-GROUSE (CONSENT)****Today's Item**Information Action 

Consider approving the Department's request for a 30-day extension to review the petition to list greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

- Received petition Nov 21, 2022
- Transmitted petition to the Department Dec 1, 2022
- Public receipt of petition (Item 8A) Feb 8-9, 2023
- **Today consider the Department's request for a 30-day extension Feb 8-9, 2023**

**Background**

On November 21, 2022, the Commission received a petition from the Center of Biological Diversity to list greater sage-grouse as threatened or endangered under CESA. On December 1, 2022, the Commission transferred the petition to the Department for review.

California Fish and Game Code Section 2073.5 requires that the Department evaluate the petition and submit a written evaluation with a recommendation to the Commission within 90 days of receiving the petition; under this section, the Department may request an extension of up to 30 days to complete the evaluation. The Department has requested a 30-day extension (Exhibit 1); if approved, the due date for the Department's evaluation would change from March 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023.

**Significant Public Comments**

A commenter expresses concern over the decline in greater sage-grouse and gives a short description of several populations (Exhibit 2).

**Recommendation**

**Commission staff:** Approve the Department's request for a 30-day extension.

**Exhibits**

1. [Department memo requesting 30-day extension, received January 23, 2023](#)
2. [Email from Robert Rutkowski, received November 18, 2022](#)

**Motion**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 5 through 7 on the consent calendar.

## Memorandum

**Date:** January 18, 2023

**To:** Melissa Miller-Henson  
Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission

**From:** Charlton H. Bonham  
Director

**Subject: Request for 30-day Extension, Greater Sage-Grouse Petition Evaluation**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) requests a 30-day extension of time pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2073.5 to allow the Department additional time to analyze and evaluate the petition to list the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) under the California Endangered Species Act and to complete the evaluation report. This extension would change the due date of the Department's evaluation report from 90 days, due on March 1, 2023, to 120 days, due on March 31, 2023.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Scott Gardner, Wildlife Branch, at [wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov) or (916) 801-6257.

ec: Chad Dibble  
Deputy Director  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Pete Figura  
Environmental Program Manager  
Wildlife Branch

Neil Clipperton  
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)  
Wildlife Branch

**From:** Robert E. Rutkowski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 18, 2022 11:14 AM  
**To:** FGC  
**Cc:** Keith Abouchar  
**Subject:** Petition Seeks California Endangered Species Protection for Sage Grouse

Melissa Miller-Henson  
Executive Director  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814 fgc@fgc.ca.gov | (916) 653-4899, (916) 653-7229

Re: Petition Seeks California Endangered Species Protection for Sage Grouse

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a petition today to protect greater sage grouse in the state under the California Endangered Species Act. The petition demonstrates that most of the greater sage grouse populations in California have declined significantly and are at imminent risk of being wiped out.

It's alarming that nearly all sage grouse populations in California continue to decline, and these magnificent birds are now only found in a fraction of their former range. More legal protections are needed because threats to sage grouse and their sagebrush habitat keep increasing. Years of voluntary conservation measures haven't stabilized these populations or provided the protections these birds and their habitat need to survive in California.

Sage grouse risk disappearing from California because of habitat loss and other threats from land development, mining, invasive species, wildfire, climate change, off-road vehicle use and increased predation.

Many of the sage grouse's sub-populations in California are below the minimum population threshold, increasingly isolated and at imminent risk of disappearing.

Greater sage grouse are famous for their showy plumage and elaborate mating dances, during which the males make popping sounds with large, inflated air sacs. There are two separate units of greater sage grouse in the state: a northern California population in Lassen and Modoc counties and the bi-state sage-grouse population, which is found east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains straddling the California-Nevada border in Inyo and Mono counties.

The bi-state population is a genetically unique and isolated population of greater sage grouse, with nearly all subpopulations at risk of extirpation. Only the Bodie Hills sage-grouse population in the bi-state area has shown strong stability in recent years.

Petition:

[https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.biologicaldiversity.org%2Fspecies%2Fbirds%2Fgreater\\_sage\\_grouse%2Fpdfs%2FCESA-petition-CA-sage-grouse-with-appendices-2022-11-18.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cfgc%40fgc.ca.gov%7C8db2b3fe17fb4da94e5e08dac9990b4d%7C4b633c25efbf40069f1507442ba7aa0b%7C0%7C1%7C638043956416847479%7CUnknown%7CTWfbpGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=K3QPPy1DDy0Uo%2BKd166X23DcsfXZhC3zFBTle9b5mQM%3D&mp;reserved=0](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.biologicaldiversity.org%2Fspecies%2Fbirds%2Fgreater_sage_grouse%2Fpdfs%2FCESA-petition-CA-sage-grouse-with-appendices-2022-11-18.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cfgc%40fgc.ca.gov%7C8db2b3fe17fb4da94e5e08dac9990b4d%7C4b633c25efbf40069f1507442ba7aa0b%7C0%7C1%7C638043956416847479%7CUnknown%7CTWfbpGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=K3QPPy1DDy0Uo%2BKd166X23DcsfXZhC3zFBTle9b5mQM%3D&mp;reserved=0)

Yours sincerely,  
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:  
Correspondence Team  
Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

