



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Dave Freudenthal, *Governor*
Jason Fearnelyhough, *Director*
2219 Carey Ave. • Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7321 • Fax: (307) 777-6593
Web: agriculture.wy.gov • Email: wda1@state.wy.us

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

July 27, 2009

John Glover, Acting Director
Easements Programs Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm and Ranch Lands Program
PO Box 2890, RM. 6819-S
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Mr. Glover:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the proposed interim final rule correction on the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP).

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it is important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports the conservation, protection and restoration of America's farm and ranchlands. We believe the benefits to these programs are multifaceted for the private landowner, the wildlife utilizing these private lands and the public for their water quality, aesthetic values and open space. We write the NRCS in support of the clarification and correction related to real property right on conservation easements in FRPP.

We continue to support and encourage NRCS to authorize eligible conservation easement entities to hold the easement deeds and monitor the restrictions set forth in the contract. We do not support Federal Government acquiring real property rights on or within private lands. However, we do agree with the recent correction and removal of the "*Secretary's authority to purchase easements or other interests in eligible land*" and replace the language with "*shall facilitate and provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements or other interests in eligible land,*" is much clearer and supported by the WDA.

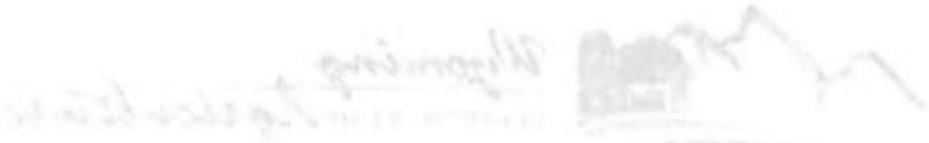
We believe landowners interested in setting land aside for conservation in an easement would prefer to work with local or in-state entities that specialize in establishing easements for fair market value. The easement entities can work with neighboring landowners to create large, landscape scale easements, which is more beneficial to all.

BOARD MEMBERS

Juan Reyes, *District 1* • Jim Hodder, *District 2* • Shaun Sims, *District 3* • Jim Bennage, *District 4* • Joe Thomas, *District 5*
Bryan Brost, *District 6* • Jim Price, Jr., *District 7*

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick Zimmerer, *Southeast* • Dalin Winters, *Northwest* • John Hansen, *Southwest* • Bridget Kukowski, *Northeast*



The WDA thanks the NRCS for receiving our comments. We look forward to reviewing the final rules and to the implementation of these programs onto the farm and ranchlands across Wyoming.

Sincerely,

Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/jw

- Cc: Governor's Planning Office
WDA Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming NRCS State Office

The WDA supports the conservation protection and restoration of public lands in Wyoming. We believe the ability to have programs and projects on the public lands that will benefit the wildlife and the people of the state is a high priority. We are in support of the NRCS in their efforts to provide a high quality of conservation programs in Wyoming.

We thank the NRCS for their support and encourage them to continue to work with the WDA and the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, Wyoming Wool Growers Association, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, Wyoming State Grazing Board, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and Wyoming NRCS State Office.

We believe that the implementation of these programs will be a benefit to the state of Wyoming and the people of the state. We look forward to reviewing the final rules and to the implementation of these programs onto the farm and ranchlands across Wyoming.