

October 27, 2021

Secretary Deb Haaland
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 2025

Dear Secretaries Haaland and Vilsack:

The undersigned organizations, which represent millions of recreational shooters, hunters, and wildlife conservationists, write to express our appreciation of the recent work that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Arizona has undertaken to provide improvements and management of recreational shooting on public lands. Three range sites are under construction and two others are awaiting contracting in the greater Phoenix area. In addition, three BLM sites are being considered for development near Santa Fe, New Mexico.

We believe that the BLM's range sites in Arizona are an excellent model for facilitating and managing informal recreational shooting on other lands managed by the BLM, as well as lands managed by the US Forest Service (USFS). More intensive, informal recreational shooting is, like most other forms of recreation, site specific.

Proper sites for the kind of management undertaken by the BLM in Arizona require proximity to communities, developed legal access, relative freedom from conflicts, and have natural backdrops. Although there are some 433 million acres of BLM and USFS managed lands, sites meeting the above criteria for intensive recreational shooting are thought to be limited. Thus, such sites need to be identified and planned for future development before their value is compromised by other permitted land uses. In addition, issues associated with intensive recreational shooting such as conflict with other recreational uses, safety, and protection of natural resources would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

We urge you to ask the BLM and the USFS to identify shooting sites and develop partnerships with state agencies and others who can assist in serving the significant demand that exists for the Arizona-style shooting sites on other multiple-use federal lands. Passage of the Marksmanship Training and Improvement Act, that amended the Pittman-Robertson Act, provides incentives to the state fish and wildlife agencies to build shooting ranges and could provide federal funds for developing ranges on BLM and USFS managed lands.

Working under the umbrella of the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing and Shooting Sports Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which has been operative since the late 1990's, our organizations are available to assist in fostering the necessary partnerships to expand federal land management of recreational shooting and the development of ranges beyond Arizona and New Mexico. Presently, the MOU is in the process of being renewed. The undersigned are signatories to the renewed MOU, as are USFS and the US Army Corps of Engineers. We look forward to the signatures soon of the land management agencies within the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Boone and Crockett Club
Camp Fire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Mule Deer Foundation
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Public Lands Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Mississippi

CC: Randy Moore, Chief of the USFS
Michael D. Nedd, BLM Deputy Director Operations
Nada Wolff Culver, BLM Director of Policy and Programs