Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 2, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chair, Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
Chair, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Carper and Duckworth:

As members representing the states impacted by the recovery of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
(GYE) grizzly bear, we write to ask for immediate consideration of S. 973, the Grizzly Bear State
Management Act of 2021. Introduced in March of this year by delegation members of Wyoming,
Montana, and Idaho, this bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife and
is awaiting action. The legislation is simple but of utmost importance to the lives and livelihoods of our
residents and all Americans who visit the Greater Yellowstone region.

The story of the GYE grizzly bear should be one of triumph and success for federal, state, and local
conservation efforts. Instead, it has become another story of government bureaucracy and failure that only
casts doubt on the efficacy of the Endangered Species Act. In 1972, population estimates of the GYE
grizzly were as low as 136 bears. In 1975, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) listed the grizzly
bear as a threatened species in the lower 48 states. The Service identified six recovery ecosystems or
populations of grizzly bears in the lower 48 states: the Greater Yellowstone, the Northern Continental
Divide, the Bitterroot, the Selkirk, the Cabinet-Yaak, and the North Cascades. S. 973 addresses only the
GYE population.

In 2019, the Service placed the number of bears at 728, and some estimates put the population closer to
1200 bears. In 2017, the Service proposed delisting the GYE grizzly, citing their strong population
recovery and the doubling of their range. Three different administrations of both parties, the Bush,
Obama, and Trump administrations, have all agreed it is past time for the species to be delisted and
management returned to the states. In a response to an April 22, 2021 letter from the Montana, Wyoming,
and Idaho delegations, the Biden Administration Fish and Wildlife Service stated "grizzly bears in the
Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) have met
biological recovery criteria."

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, the group of federal, state, and tribal scientists and biologists
responsible for the long-term monitoring and research of the GYE grizzly have determined that the bears
are at or near the carrying capacity of the park. Grizzlies are moving well beyond areas where the bears
can exist, causing loss of human life, damage to livestock, and eroding public support for the recovery of
this iconic and important species. Clearly, this is not good for either public safety or the welfare of the
animal. So far this year in 2021 alone, more than 42 grizzly bears have been euthanized due to conflicts
with humans, killed by other bears, drowned in canals, or hit by cars.

Just this past week, constituents recounted an occurrence of state game and fish officials being attacked
by a grizzly bear while in the field documenting an estimated $400,000 worth of livestock damage on a
ranch outside Yellowstone National Park. We hear often from outfitters, hikers, hunters, ranchers, and

other public land users of their concern over this issue. We feel compelled to take action. The Grizzly Bear State Management Act is essential to ensuring the recovery of the GYE grizzly is a happy conservation success story, not a grisly failure.

We urge immediate consideration and action on the bill and stand by to assist with any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

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Cynthia M. Lummis
U.S. Senator

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Steve Daines
U.S. Senator

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John Barrasso, M.D.
U.S. Senator

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Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator

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James E. Risch
U.S. Senator