

May XX, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary of Interior  
U.S. Department of Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretaries Blinken, Haaland, and Vilsack;

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are seeking formal support from you for a global initiative called “The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP),” an effort proposed by the Government of Mongolia with the support from many organizations and institutions in the United States and around the world.

The IYRP initiative will promote a wide variety of activities prior to and during 2026 focused on the world’s rangelands and grasslands, including awareness-raising on key issues, assistance in targeting research assessments of critical knowledge gaps, and facilitation of partnerships that combine resources to promote sustainable resource use and improved livelihoods. More than 50 nations and 164 non-governmental organizations have endorsed the IYRP so far.

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) formally endorsed the IYRP proposal in October 2020. The next steps include a decision for approval by the FAO Conference in June 2021, followed by a final consideration during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2021. Your agency is one of several in the United States that may be asked to weigh in on the IYRP decision by the UNGA. Strong support from the United States will provide leadership for the wise and sustainable use of rangelands and grasslands, both within the United States and around the world.

The undersigned organizations offer their support for an IYRP. We collectively recognize the high environmental, social, and economic values of rangelands and grasslands for the maintenance of livelihoods, biodiversity, provision of diverse ecosystem services, and climate-change mitigation. Rangelands, grasslands, and the people that derive sustenance from them are

underrecognized and undervalued entities in America and globally; the IYRP will be used as a focal point to celebrate and promote these resources.

The undersigned organizations are committed to mobilizing key resources before, during, and after 2026 in support of the proposed objectives of the IYRP. This letter illustrates our collective commitment to consensus- and coalition-building, within the United States, across North America, and beyond.

We understand that an IYRP for 2026 will only be declared with the support of national governments. Endorsement by the United States is therefore vital to this aim. We contend that such support is a very good fit for efforts by the United States to combat the effects of climate change, both at home and abroad, as well as promoting equity among the diverse peoples that rely on rangelands and grasslands for their livelihoods. The United States has an opportunity to join the diverse nations that rely on rangelands and grasslands for their future prosperity and to support a worthy cause on the international stage.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the IYRP initiative. We look forward to working with you to advance the IYRP for 2026.

***Attachment: A one-page “Call for Support of the IYRP” is provided here as an attached file. Please consult this document as well as the comprehensive IYRP website for background information (<https://www.iyrp.info>).***

Sincerely,

*(Stakeholders listed alphabetically below in a left-adjusted column)*

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