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1/21/25

**Sonya German, State Director Montana/Dakotas**  
**BLM State Office 5001**  
**Southgate Drive Billings, MT 59101**

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to express our strong and unequivocal opposition to the Department of the Interior's decision to revoke the American Prairie Reserve's grazing lease on public land, with the stated intention of reinstating the lease only under the condition that it be used exclusively for cattle. This action is not only unnecessary and politically motivated, but it also sets a deeply troubling precedent that threatens the livelihoods of family-owned bison operations like ours and the many ranchers with whom we maintain longstanding business relationships.

Restricting a public grazing lease to cattle alone—despite the proven ecological compatibility of bison and the long history of their presence on these landscapes—represents a significant departure from science-based land management. It signals a willingness to allow political pressure, rather than sound stewardship principles, to dictate federal grazing policy. Such a shift undermines confidence in the fairness and consistency of federal land-use decisions.

More importantly, this stipulation opens the door for other agencies and jurisdictions to impose similar restrictions on public grazing leases. For those of us who rely on access to public lands to sustain our operations, this creates an immediate and existential threat. Our family-owned company, like many others in the bison industry, depends on stable, predictable grazing policy to maintain our herds, meet contractual obligations, and support the rural economies we are part of. The ripple effects of this decision will not be limited to one organization or one lease; they will reverberate across an entire sector of agricultural producers who have invested heavily in responsible, regenerative, and economically vital bison ranching.

Bison ranchers contribute meaningfully to conservation, rural employment, and the preservation of America's natural heritage. Penalizing our industry through arbitrary species-specific restrictions is counterproductive, economically damaging, and inconsistent with the Department's stated mission to manage public lands for the benefit of all Americans.

We respectfully urge the Department to reconsider this decision, restore the American Prairie Reserve's grazing lease without species-based limitations, and reaffirm its commitment to fair, science-driven, and non-political land management practices. The future of many family-run operations—and the integrity of public-lands policy itself—depends on it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the real-world impacts of this decision on producers like ourselves and the communities we support.

Sincerely,

***Colton and Jilian Jones***  
**Cheyenne River Buffalo Ranch LLC**  
**Wild Idea Buffalo Company**