

Suit: Grouse protections driven by politics, not science

By Scott Sonner, AP

Rural Nevadans suing to block the Obama administration's sage-grouse protections say a trail of internal government documents shows politics was the driving force behind a pre-determined policy that flies in the face of its experts' own best science.

Their latest motion filed in federal court in Reno seeks to void the protections that have severely restricted the development of millions of acres of federal land across 10 Western states.

Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt and lawyers for nine counties, ranchers and miners say three top Interior Department officials who dubbed themselves the "Grouseketeers" illegally sought input from conservationists outside the planning process.

They also say the U.S. Bureau of Land Management ignored its staff's advice to reopen the process to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement.