

December 4, 2013

Dear Idaho Legislative Committee,

As an Idaho native and ecologist, I am against any bill that would transfer Idaho's public lands to State or private citizens. Idaho's public lands are an important part of what makes Idaho special and why I have chosen to raise my family in this beautiful State. Our public lands belong to all of us. They are a place where we can hunt, fish, camp and simply enjoy the great outdoors.

U.S. Public lands, managed mainly by the USFS and BLM, also provide countless economic inputs into the Idaho economy in the form of timber, minerals, energy, and grazing – all of which are subsidized. The Forest Service spent over \$158 million dollars in 2010 to maintain Forest Service lands, with an additional \$175 million for firefighting alone; a great benefit to the timber industry. Indeed, BLM lands available for grazing are far more affordable than comparable private lands. Overall, it costs millions of dollars to manage these lands than what is brought in.

Federal lands are also managed for "multiple uses", meaning that lands must be "managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archaeological values" (Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976).

The state of Idaho is not financially capable of managing current public lands nor is it legally able, as outlined in the Idaho constitution, to manage them for "multiple uses" as does the Federal Government.

Either inadvertently or by design, these State lands would have to be sold to private owners. This means a transfer of public ownership (lands owned by "we the people") to private ownership (lands owned by the wealthy few). Proponents of such efforts have referred to federal properties as "land lock-ups", but to quote the late Idaho conservationist Ted Trueblood, "there is no lock-up more complete than a 'no trespassing' sign on private land". And that is exactly what will happen to Idaho's public lands if they are transferred to the State and ultimately, private ownership.

This shift from public to private ownership would be devastating from an environmental standpoint – it would greatly limit any protections for the environment and lead to unsustainable land management practices.

For these reasons, I ask the Federal Lands Interim Committee to dismiss any bill that would eliminate Idaho's public lands.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,
Tamsen Binggeli

Ecosystem Sciences
tdoner@ecosystemsciences.com