

December 4, 2013

Idaho State, Federal Lands Interim Committee
Boise, ID

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue of the State of Idaho seeking control of federal lands.

Firstly, as a citizen of the United States, I object to the State of Idaho's goal of seeking ownership of federal lands. These federal lands belong to all of the people of the United States. If Idaho wishes to seek ownership of them then the state must ask the permission of the people of the United States through federal legislation not by suing the federal government. I also feel it is a waste of Idaho taxpayer money to use it to sue the federal government for ownership of these federal lands.

Secondly, I question whether the State of Idaho has the funds to manage these lands without selling them off or stripping them of their resources. Selling the lands and stripping resources is not a sustainable method of caring for these federal lands. A couple of years ago Idaho was ready to sell off its state parks due to budget problems. I find that method of balancing the Idaho budget problematic and would not want our federal public lands to end up in that situation. I recreate on our federal public lands and want them to stay public and federal. I am also a bird watcher and appreciate the federal role in managing federal public lands for the benefit of wildlife as well as other uses. I appreciate the fact that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) helps to ensure that my public lands are being managed in an environmentally sound way in which I have input as a citizen of the United States. I do not feel I would have the same level of input if these lands were controlled by the State of Idaho.

Thirdly, what about the payment in lieu of taxes funds that counties receive for the federal lands in their counties. This is an important source of income for counties and I don't envision the State of Idaho continuing to pay these funds to the counties. Another issue is fire fighting for which the federal government pays many millions of dollars in the state to control fires on federal lands. The management of federal lands by the federal government brings many sources of income to the state of Idaho, either through salaries paid to employees, contracts for goods and services, and many others ways of which I am probably not even aware.

For the reasons stated above I do not support the State of Idaho taking control of federal lands. Please do not spend anymore Idaho tax dollars pursuing this idea but instead seek ways to work with the federal government to protect these lands for all citizens.

Sincerely,



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