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Comments submitted to: Federal Lands Interim Committee, Legislature of Idaho

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Good afternoon Members of the Federal Lands Interim Committee. My name is Richard Howard. I live in Boise and have been a citizen of Idaho for 70 years. I was born in Pocatello in 1943, the son of a medical doctor and practicing nurse.

This testimony is not a rant, not a protest, not a profound statement. It is about a key value, it is about our land, our home our State.

Idaho's landscape has a history of being painted, written about, and used for a diversity of economic and recreational interests. This landscape is the foundation of our freedoms that we all share.

Take away federal lands and many of those freedoms are gone....gone forever. The State will be compelled to eventually sell and convert the lands to corporate and private ownership. Orange posts and fierce warning signs will glare at my freedoms and yours. "No trespassing." What kind of legacy is this for our children?

Vets coming home to Idaho from WW II, Korea, Viet-Nam, Iraq, and from Afghanistan breathed a fresh-air of relief knowing they could roam through Idaho's green conifer mountains and sage-bunchgrass plains or float blue rivers.

Don't take this foundation of freedom away, the freedom to re-center with family and friends in the cherished landscape of Idaho.