

Dear Rep. Burgoyne,

I hope it is not too late for me to voice my opinion on the matter of the State of Idaho trying to take over ownership and management of Idaho's federal, public lands. And I hope you can forward this message to the powers that be in the state house or send me the necessary email addresses. Thank you.

I would like to state that I am firmly opposed to state control of Idaho's public lands. I want these lands to remain public for many reasons - access, protection from the devastation caused by mining development, protection from being sold to private energy companies, protection from logging companies, protection from being sold to the highest bidder to line someone's pocket, such as a privately held residential development company from out of state.

Idaho's public lands are well administered. I have enjoyed many places of BLM land in Idaho and found them to be in good condition. There is no good reason for the state to assume it can manage Idaho's public lands better than they are already being managed. Our public lands are accessible to the public, in good condition, managed economically and in an environmentally sound and fair manner that is not taxing the heck out of Idahoans.

In fact, I would argue, I don't think the State of Idaho could manage these thousands of acres any better than they already are being managed by the BLM because of a tremendous lack of funds if Idaho loses the federal funding it currently has. The cost to taxpayers to adequately manage these lands to the standard they are now being managed would be astronomical.

What would then happen, since Idaho taxpayers obviously could not pay enough in taxes to manage these lands as well as they are now managed by the feds, is a full on sale of much of Idaho to private interests. Then Idahoans would be cut off from enjoying these lands, the land would be developed and likely put in a ruinous or inaccessible state for the most part because oversight would be lacking and gates would be locked, and over time the very people who live in Idaho would not be able to enjoy their own beautiful outdoors that Idaho is known for.

In this regard, millions of recreation dollars that are the back bone of many Idaho communities, as well as other economic benefits that flow into Idaho because of our fabulous tourism in the outdoors, would dry up. State of Idaho management would be ruinous to tourism because of development encroachment on the ecosystems that support vital rivers, mountains, prairies, deserts. Case in point, the state of Maine. There is not one public place to hike or enjoy the wilderness in Maine except a National Park and a couple state parks. The rest of the state is totally private and locked up. You cannot walk down a country road there because it is private property. So, there are very few recreation dollars that flow into Maine excepting the coastal area. Idaho does not have a coast to draw tourism dollars, but we currently have boundless and beautiful

open space in the mountains, deserts, prairies and river systems that bring big money to the State of Idaho, thank goodness.

And managing all this land is not on the back of the average low income Idaho taxpayer.

Another big problem I have with this idea of state ownership and management is the cost of fighting wildfires,. There is NO WAY Idaho taxpayers have the resources to pay for battling these massive wildfires. The state MUST have federal dollars for this huge expense. It is absolutely irresponsible and ignorant to think otherwise.

In conclusion, I see this bid by the State of Idaho to takeover our public lands as short sighted, ignorant and irresponsible. It threatens to put Idaho taxpayers in extreme economic hardship and our public lands in extreme jeopardy of being sold off and privatized to the highest bidder. Only a select group of developer type people will benefit to the detriment of the average Idahoan who will pay dearly in the loss of public access to our beautiful state as well as in higher taxes.

We cannot let this happen.

Sincerely,

Karen Knudtsen
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