

State takeover of Federal Lands

Idaho is a second class State. You may ask why I make such a statement. No one in Idaho feels they should be treated as second class to people in other States but it is true. All of the States east of the Mississippi owned all of the land in their States and those States made most of the land private because these lands privately owned are an engine of prosperity. Some States west of the Mississippi have achieved ownership of their lands. This initiative to turn over the Federal Lands to Idaho is the best thing that can happen to the people of Idaho.

The BLM was originally created to dispose of the federal lands the citizens wanted to turn into private lands. There are millions of acres not being used in our state that are not scenic and have infrastructure accessible. In my view some of these lands have scenic and recreational value but others of them have more value if they can be made into economic engines of production. Think for a moment about the mismanagement of the Federal lands we have seen the last few years. The citizens of Idaho have breathed more smoky air in the summers than ever before. This has been caused by the theory the Federal Lands should not be used for lumber production and grazing.

These non-scenic lands should be either disposed of as private lands or the state should decide on an ongoing basis what the disposition of these lands should be. Local control has always benefited the citizenry. Private property ownership is what made the U.S. the wealthiest nation in the world. At the very least a mechanism should be found to trade remote state lands for non- scenic Federal Lands with economic possibility. The state can then sell or lease these lands to individuals. **These lands are earning very little money for the School Endowment Fund. You as Legislators know well the problems our insufficient budget has caused for our schools, roads and infrastructure.**

BLM is currently trying to buy some scenic lands close to the Snake River for scenic setaside. Our State should be able to sell or lease lands that have no scenic value to willing buyers? There are 100,000 acres of Federal Lands in the County I live in, that is Jerome County, within 10 miles of an interstate highway and have a railroad running through them. These lands have the opportunity to be a taxpaying asset and a job-producing asset. Our young people are moving out to where there is better pay. The high school I graduated from is smaller than it was when I went to school there. Some industry may use these lands to bring good jobs to the Magic Valley so our sons and daughters don't have to leave. Last year the payment in lieu of taxes to the county of Jerome was a paltry 85 cents per acre and the worst part is there was very little production for the economy and no jobs were created. One other issue is the high price of building lots for young families. These young families have to pay \$40,000.00+ for building lots and the BLM is tying up millions of acres for no good reason. The mortgages these families will pay for a home and lot will last their lifetime.

I am a hunter and a fisherman and I am confident there will be better hunting and fishing when Idaho citizens have a say in the lands management instead of some Federal Bureaucrat making rules. The State has problems with conflicts of land use. More acres could be a solution. Respectfully,

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