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I would like to thank the committee for coming to our great city to hear our views of Public Lands. I'm Catherine Talkington, Legislative candidate Seat 24B, Twin Falls, and I come to you today to testify what I have heard from knocking on more than 6500 doors in our area, listening to people's deep interest about keeping the land open for everyone's use. There are three major concerns I hear and believe this is as close to "grassroots" feedback as your committee is likely to receive, anywhere in the state.

First, Idaho Attorney Lawrence Wasden already told you what you don't want to hear. Quoting him about federal land being turned over to the state: "the Feds owned the property before we ever became a state. We gave up any claim to those unappropriated public lands, forever."

Second: Special interest money supports some Idaho politicians who are pushing to put public lands up for high bid, and is endangering our state's second largest business. Tourism is a \$6.3 Billion industry employing 77,000 people who pay \$450 million in taxes. In addition, 70% of Idaho's cattle graze on cheap public land fees. And a number of Idaho counties depend on Payment in Lieu of Taxes, or PILT payments, to provide critical public services. \$28 million dollars are at risk from the loss of PILT funding. And the Twin Falls School District received \$90,000 from endowment lands this year. All of this is threatened by the illegal takeover of federal lands.

Last Point: The derision by some Idaho politicians for the immense number of people who fish, hunt, camp, hike, ATV and ride the scenic waters, not to mention the cattle ranchers whose livelihoods are threatened...it is a distortion of our heritage. When the use of public lands for business, recreation or balancing budgets is characterized as simply "playgrounds for environmentalists," well you can see why public confidence in the Idaho Legislature is so low.

My time is up: My message is: keep our public lands accessible to Idaho citizens and don't try to lease it out to the highest corporate bidder.

