



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 7, 2017

GUNNISON COUNTY OPPOSES TRANSFER OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO STATE OWNERSHIP Resolution #2017-4 Adopted on 2/21/2017

Gunnison County, Colorado – On 2/21/2017, the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) was added to the growing list of Colorado Counties that have formally opposed the transfer of federal public lands to state ownership. Over 80% of Gunnison County is comprised of public lands, and the BOCC views those lands as essential to the health of the County's communities, as well as the protection of the County's heritage, natural environment, wildlife habitats, and agricultural sector.

The BOCC agrees with Governor John Hickenlooper, who was quoted during a Colorado Public Radio interview as saying, "Our protected public lands are part of what makes Colorado special. Shifting the burden for maintaining and protecting those lands to the state would be expensive and irresponsible. Transferring ownership of this land would threaten sportsmen's access, fire protection, and would shift millions of dollars of cost to state taxpayers."⁽¹⁾ After transfer of public lands to state ownership, privatization would be a considerable risk due to cash-strapped states' inability to afford the management of part or all of the lands within their borders. Management of the lands would necessitate extensive spending for services such as road and trail maintenance, noxious weed treatment, habitat restoration, and emergency services. Merely the loss of federal funding for emergency services such as wildfire suppression could prove to be an insurmountable obstacle, as noted by the fact that the federal government spent an average of \$1.85B⁽²⁾ on national wildfire suppression efforts over the past five years.

Additionally, privatization of those lands across the state could eliminate public access for outdoor recreation activities, which would reduce the quality of life and lead to financial concerns for all Coloradoans. Within the state, outdoor recreation contributes nearly \$34.5B⁽³⁾ to the economy by the generation of \$13.2B in consumer spending, 124,600 jobs, \$4.2B in wages and salaries, and \$994M in state and local tax revenue.⁽⁴⁾

Nationally, outdoor recreation generates \$646B⁽⁴⁾ in direct spending, 6.1M⁽⁴⁾ jobs, and nearly \$80B⁽⁵⁾ in combined national, state and local tax revenue annually.

For more information, please contact Gunnison County Administration at (970) 641-0248. Resolution #2017-4, attached, can also be found online at <http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/2336>.

References:

- (1) Colorado Public Radio. (2014). Colorado governor race: Hickenlooper, Beauprez, Hempy and Hess on the issues. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpr.org/news/story/colorado-governor-race-hickenlooper-beauprez-hempy-and-hess-issues>
- (2) National Interagency Fire Center. (2017). Federal firefighting costs (suppression only). Retrieved from: https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_documents/SuppCosts.pdf
- (3) State of Colorado. (n.d.). Economic impacts of outdoor recreation fact sheet. Retrieved from: <https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Research/SocialScience/EconomicImpactsOutdoorRecFactsheet.pdf>
- (4) Outdoor Industry Association. (n.d.). Outdoor recreation economy. Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/research-tools/outdoor-recreation-economy/>
- (5) Outdoor Industry Association. (2013). The outdoor recreation economy 2012. Retrieved from: <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/the-outdoor-recreation-economy-2012/>



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GUNNISON COUNTY
RESOLUTION NO. 2017-4**

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING GUNNISON COUNTY POLICY TO OPPOSE TRANSFER
OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO STATE OWNERSHIP**

WHEREAS, approximately eighty-two percent (82%) of lands in Gunnison County are owned by the United States as public lands available for public use; and

WHEREAS, lands owned by the United States as public lands available for public use are an invaluable heritage and foundation for our natural and social environments and communities; and

WHEREAS, lands owned by the United States as public lands for public use both demonstrate and foster our commitment to common and equal access, and enjoyment and use of our national heritage; and

WHEREAS, lands owned by the United States as public lands for public use contribute, and bind us, to appreciative and shared experiences of living, learning, growth and responsibility; and

WHEREAS, lands owned by the United States as public lands for public use provide—as Wallace Stegner wrote—“geographies of hope” and places in which “...we are all each other’s consequences...”; and

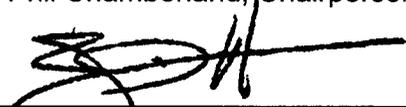
WHEREAS, there is a reasonable apprehension that transfer of federal public lands available for public use to state ownership may devolve to “privatization” of such lands—and the loss of this heritage, foundation, commitment and geography.

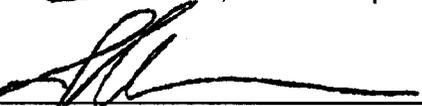
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Gunnison County, Colorado to formally express its policy to oppose, generally, the transfer of federal public lands to state ownership.

INTRODUCED by Commissioner Messner, seconded by Commissioner Houck, and adopted this 21st day of February, 2017.

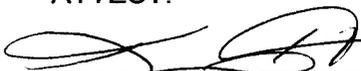
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GUNNISON COUNTY, COLORADO

By 
Phil Chamberland, Chairperson

By 
Jonathan Houck, Vice Chairperson


John Messner, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Deputy County Clerk

