

Testimony of Jake Garfield  
Deputy Director, Utah Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office  
Before the National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee  
House Natural Resources Committee  
Regarding H.R. 6240  
Legislative Hearing - June 23, 2022  
10:00 AM

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher, Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the hearing today.

My name is Jake Garfield, I am the Deputy Director for the State of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office. The role of our agency is to work with our partners on practical solutions to the challenges facing Utah's lands, including both current Federal lands and formerly Federal lands previously transferred to other entities.

We strongly support H.R. 6240, a bill "to release the reversionary interest of the United States in certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah." We greatly appreciate Representative Chris Stewart's dedicated work to move this bill forward.

This is a simple bill that would erase the reversionary interest currently held by the Federal Government on 593 acres of non-Federal lands within the University of Utah's Research Park. This is not a bill to transfer any public lands to private parties. This is not a bill that would change the current use of these lands in any way. It is simply a bill to remove a Federal reversionary interest from certain lands on the University's campus that were transferred to the University of Utah under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act in 1965.

The University of Utah's Research Park plays a critical role for Utah's economy, with a diverse array of technology and pharmaceutical companies performing cutting edge research into new technologies and medicines that continue to better the lives of people around the globe. Many of these companies located in Research Park provide educational and employment opportunities for the University of Utah's STEM students, and 81 different University academic departments also use facilities within Research Park.

The use of the Research Park land in question has evolved since 1965 when the land was deeded from the Federal government to the University of Utah, just as the role of American research universities has evolved, with universities increasing their partnerships with the private sector. University officials acted in good faith as they used this Research Park land to further these private sector partnerships and improve the University's ability to perform cutting edge scientific research. Over time, the specific provisions within the patent prohibiting commercial activities on the land were gradually forgotten as the University diversified its uses for the Research Park land and as new University personnel became involved in the development of the land. Today Research Park is a highly developed, central component of the University's campus. Mistakes may have been made in the past, but the best path forward for

all parties, including both the University of Utah and the Federal government, is to simply release the reversionary interest back to the University of Utah.

Enforcement of the reversionary interest by Federal Government would create a nightmare scenario for the University, for the companies and academic departments located in Research Park, and most of all for the Bureau of Land Management, which would see no benefit from taking control of the Research Park lands.

This bill represents an opportunity for Congress to assist one of America's premier research universities, the University of Utah, further its academic and scientific objectives by cleanly removing the current danger of the University losing title to a large part of its campus.

We urge your support for this bill and thank the subcommittee for the opportunity.