



**NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®**

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June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Grijalva:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) more than 6 million members and supporters and 50 state and territorial affiliates, we would like to submit the attached guiding resolution, agreed upon by unanimous affiliate vote, as a statement of opposition against anti-government extremism on public lands, especially proposals allowing the large-scale transfer, sale, or giveaway of public lands into state control.

NWF has been working vigorously to block sell-off efforts and other extremist activity involving public lands around the United States for many years. NWF and our affiliates have fought efforts in legislatures throughout the nation against state takeover of federal public lands, as well as unnecessary divestiture of state and other public lands to private interests. In the West, we have stood with thousands of sportsmen at peaceful rallies throughout the West to show support for America's public lands, and opposition to misguided seizure attempts.

In May, NWF partnered with Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña, Inc. (SOPI), Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO), and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to appeal to legislators that allowing for the sell-off of Puerto Rico's Vieques National Wildlife Refuge under H.R. 4900, the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), would be a grave mistake. Your support on that issue was greatly appreciated. Earlier this year, NWF and 37 affiliates submitted a letter in response to the recent Malheur occupation, denouncing the violent takeover and asking that justice be brought to the occupiers.

The extremist agenda surrounding public lands threatens not only the safety of government employees and wildlife populations, but also the right of Americans across the United States to

access and utilize their public lands. The right to enjoy our great outdoors is a key tenet of America's national identity. NWF is pleased to hear that the Natural Resources Committee will be holding a forum to address these serious threats. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

National Wildlife Federation

2014 Proposed Resolution No. Lands – 1

Submitted by: Montana Wildlife Federation, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Colorado Wildlife Federation, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Nevada Wildlife Federation, Idaho Wildlife Federation

### **Transfer of Public Lands**

1           WHEREAS, public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest  
2 Service, National Park Service and other federal agencies represent a birthright of the American  
3 people, provide invaluable habitat for fish and wildlife, afford opportunities for hunting, fishing,  
4 and other recreation, and support sustainable local economic activity; and

5           WHEREAS, the first thirteen colonies created the first Public Domain when they  
6 relinquished to the federal government their several claims to what was then the West, and all of  
7 the western states other than Texas (which entered the union as an independent republic) were  
8 created out of federal territory by formal acts of Congress; and

9           WHEREAS, the western states were created from public domain lands by acts of  
10 Congress and relinquished any and all claims to ownership of federal lands existing within their  
11 boundaries pursuant to the language within their respective Enabling Acts; and

12           WHEREAS, State legislators in Western and other states with large amounts of federal  
13 public land have passed or are attempting to pass ideologically-inspired proposals directing the  
14 federal government to extinguish its title to millions of acres of these lands and transfer title to  
15 the states in which these lands are located for various purposes, including ultimately selling the  
16 land to private interests; and

17           WHEREAS, some members of the United States Congress are proposing selling  
18 substantial amounts of federal public lands to private interests or transferring lands to states in  
19 order to generate short-term revenue and advance an anti-government political agenda; and

20           WHEREAS, the National Wildlife Federation supports a policy of retention of public  
21 lands and strict compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act which authorizes  
22 only limited disposal or exchange of federal public lands and only after careful public review of  
23 the values of those lands; and

24           WHEREAS, wholesale exchange, sale or giveaway of millions of acres of federal public  
25 lands, whether to states or private entities, is unnecessary and constitutes an irretrievable loss to  
26 all citizens of this nation as part of their national heritage; and

27           WHEREAS, state legislative mandates to the federal government to extinguish title  
28 appear to violate the U. S. Constitution's Property and Supremacy clauses; and

29           WHEREAS, The National Wildlife Federation has vigorously opposed similar proposals  
30 for blanket disposal of federal public lands in 1983 and 1984 during the Sagebrush Rebellion and  
31 again in 2006, establishing a firm precedent of contesting such attempts;

32           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Wildlife Federation, in  
33 annual meeting assembled May 1-3, 2014, in Baltimore, Maryland, hereby reaffirms its  
34 unequivocal opposition to large-scale exchange, sale or giveaway of federally managed public  
35 lands by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service or  
36 other federal land management agencies; and

37           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Wildlife Federation supports affiliates  
38 building grassroots support to combat legislative, administrative, and legal attempts to force  
39 divestiture of federal lands and educating citizens about the practical consequences of such  
40 proposals; and

41           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Wildlife Federation urges the U.S.  
42 Department of Justice to forcefully and resolutely litigate against any state that pursues a  
43 directive mandating the federal government to extinguish title to federal lands and transfer that  
44 title to the state; and

45           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Wildlife Federation urges Congress  
46 and the President to reject legislation that proposes to transfer federal lands to states, sell federal  
47 lands to private interests, or otherwise liquidate the federal estate.

