

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 14

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, THE SEC-
3 RETARY OF THE INTERIOR, THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
4 THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DEL-
5 EGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
6 STATES.

7 We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of
8 the State of Idaho assembled in the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-third
9 Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

10 WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) and the Bureau of Land
11 Management (BLM) currently administer a trust of more than 640 million acres
12 of land, mostly in western states; and

13 WHEREAS, in Idaho, more than 61 percent of the land is administered by
14 the federal government, or approximately 34 million acres, 20 million acres
15 of which are administered by the Forest Service; and

16 WHEREAS, over the last several decades, federal agencies have become
17 encumbered with conflicting federal laws and regulations causing a paraly-
18 sis of management on these lands leading to adverse effects on the ecosystem
19 such as higher incidence of insect damage, catastrophic wildfire, erosion
20 and damage to watersheds and wildlife habitat; and

21 WHEREAS, access to federally administered lands has been decreasing
22 steadily for decades. The Forest Service has reported that nearly 2,100
23 miles of Forest Service roads have been "decommissioned" in Idaho over the
24 past several decades, which, in some cases, has created severe problems in
25 the control of wildfire; and

26 WHEREAS, this inaction and lack of management has been further exacer-
27 bated by a constant stream of legal challenges to any proposed project, which
28 has hindered the ability to effectively harvest timber, forage or extract
29 minerals from our public lands, even in instances when the project's sole
30 purpose is to protect and restore the lands; and

31 WHEREAS, in the West, the economies of rural communities once relied on
32 the use of natural resources for business and job creation and tax revenues
33 for schools and counties; and

34 WHEREAS, over the past several decades, timber harvest, mineral extrac-
35 tion and grazing on lands administered by the Forest Service and BLM in Idaho
36 have severely declined, devastating local communities and the environment;
37 and

38 WHEREAS, eastern states are becoming more resistant to having their tax
39 dollars used to subsidize federal administration of western lands; and

40 WHEREAS, according to the nonpartisan Property and Environment Re-
41 search Center in Bozeman, Montana, the Forest Service and BLM lose an average
42 of \$4.38 per acre of land they administer, while western states gain an aver-
43 age of \$34.60 per acre of land they manage; and

1 WHEREAS, H.R. 2316, the Self-Sufficient Community Lands Act, has been
2 introduced in the United States House of Representatives and has previously
3 been approved by the House in a prior Congress; and

4 WHEREAS, H.R. 2316 will provide a possible path forward beyond Secure
5 Rural Schools by allowing local communities to generate the revenues neces-
6 sary to fund local operations by utilizing the natural resources available
7 in their communities instead of relying on payments from Washington, D.C.,
8 to compensate for a lack of production on the land; and

9 WHEREAS, under H.R. 2316, states may request to participate in a demon-
10 stration project to show that management of National Forest System lands un-
11 der state law, by local managers, will not only improve local economies but
12 also will improve local ecosystems; and

13 WHEREAS, each community forest demonstration area will be comprised of
14 at least 200,000 acres of National Forest System land. Nationwide, no more
15 than a total of 4 million acres may be included in these demonstration areas,
16 which is only 2 percent of all National Forest System lands; and

17 WHEREAS, the demonstration projects cannot limit or restrict access for
18 hunting, fishing or other activities in the demonstration areas; and

19 WHEREAS, all rights regarding National Forest System land included in
20 a demonstration area, including the rights of federally recognized Indian
21 tribes, are maintained; and

22 WHEREAS, the Secretary of Agriculture shall retain responsibility for
23 fire management upon these demonstration projects; and

24 WHEREAS, the BLM also administers 12 million acres within Idaho, and
25 H.R. 2316 does not include BLM lands in its current form; and

26 WHEREAS, the benefits validated within a demonstration project upon
27 Forest Service land may also be shown to be valid upon BLM administered lands
28 if given the opportunity; and

29 WHEREAS, the United States Senate has yet to introduce and pass a com-
30 panion bill to H.R. 2316.

31 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
32 sion of the Sixty-third Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and
33 the Senate concurring therein, that we respectfully request that the United
34 States House of Representatives markup and pass H.R. 2316, that the United
35 States Senate draft and pass a companion bill, and that both bodies draft
36 and pass a similar bill for an opportunity to conduct demonstration projects
37 upon BLM administered lands.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Represen-
39 tatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of
40 this Memorial to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Agri-
41 culture, the Secretary of the Interior, the President of the Senate and the
42 Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional
43 delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United
44 States.