

January 9, 2017

Representative Andy Schwartz
P.O. Box 2654
Jackson, WY 83001

Representative Mike Gierau
Box 2975
Jackson, WY 83001

Senator Leland Christensen
220 West Alta
Alta, WY 83414

Senator Don Dockstader
P.O. Box 129
Afton, WY 83110

Representative Marti Halverson
P.O. Box 5009
Etna, WY 83118

RE: Opposition to the Proposal for the State of Wyoming to Take Ownership of Federal Lands

Dear Teton County Legislators:

The Jackson Town Council and the Teton County Board of Commissioners strongly oppose the proposed public lands constitutional amendment for the following reasons:

The constitutional amendment requests residents approve the transfer of management of federally managed public lands to the state without first asking if they approve such a transfer. It seems to the Town of Jackson and Teton County that the state should first ask its residents whether they believe that federally managed public lands should be transferred to the state. Then, if the residents endorse such a transfer, the state legislature should pursue the proposed constitutional amendment or other management options. Otherwise, it is asking Wyoming citizens to decide how they might want property to be managed before they are asked if they want the property transferred.

In addition, if Wyoming residents vote to approve the management of such transferred public lands, as proposed by the constitutional amendment, this approval may give the state legislature the false impression that the residents have endorsed the actual transfer of the lands.

With approximately 97% of land in Teton County comprised of federally managed public lands, we strongly believe that the state should reject any efforts, plans or schemes to transfer federally managed

public lands to the state whether for ownership or management, and we oppose the proposed constitutional amendment.

Our rejection and opposition are founded on the following assertions:

- Managing our public lands so that they can be enjoyed by current and future generations is of critical importance to our community, our state and our nation and is a greater responsibility than one individual state can bear. The state may not be able to afford the proper management of these public lands.
- The state does not have the administrative capacity or experience to manage this large amount of land.
- These public lands in Teton County provide public recreational opportunities for residents and visitors for multiple purposes and there may be a loss of public access even with the constitutional amendment which gives access control to the state legislature.
- These federally managed public lands provide essential habitat for some of America's greatest wildlife populations and there will be loss of environmental protections since the state does not have an environmental review process similar to NEPA nor is it likely to adopt one.
- The constitutional amendment does not prohibit the sale of federal lands acquired by the state, and the provision to allow value for value land exchanges does not account for the impact of such exchanges on communities, hunting and fishing and other recreational opportunities.
- Without a state definition of multiple use or sustained yield in the proposed amendment, it is difficult to tell whether transferred lands will have the same multiple use opportunities or sustain yield requirements as they have under federal control.

On behalf of all of the citizens of the Town of Jackson and Teton County, we urge you to oppose this legislation. Attached to this letter are the resolutions adopted by the Town Council and County Commission in 2015 regarding our opposition. If you have questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Bob McLaurin, Town Manager at (307) 733-3932 or Alyssa Watkins, County Commissioner's Administrator at (307) 733-8094.

Sincerely,

Pete Muldoon
Mayor

Sincerely,

Mark Newcomb
Commissioner Chairman

cc: Jerimiah Rieman, Natural Resource Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Wyoming Congressional Delegation

Senator Eli D. Bebout, Select Federal Resource Management Committee
Representative Norine Kasperik, Select Federal Resource Management Committee
Senator Gerald E. Geis, Select Federal Resource Management Committee
Jackson Town Council
Teton County Board of County Commissioners

Resolution 15-14

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF JACKSON, WYOMING, RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF FEDERAL LANDS TO THE TOWN'S ECONOMY, RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE; AND OPPOSING ANY PROPOSAL FOR THE STATE OF WYOMING TO TAKE OWNERSHIP AND/OR CONTROL OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN THE STATE OF WYOMING

WHEREAS, Teton County includes some of the most beautiful and iconic landscapes on Earth, most of which are federal public lands owned by all Americans; and,

WHEREAS, these federal public lands, which comprise 97 percent of the land area of Teton County, provide public recreational opportunities for residents and visitors for wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, backpacking, boating, riding snow machines and all-terrain vehicles, horseback riding, skiing, bicycling, sightseeing, and numerous other outdoor recreational activities; and,

WHEREAS, these federal public lands provide essential habitat for some of America's greatest wildlife populations; and,

WHEREAS, federal public lands in Teton County, Wyoming, are the foundation of the tourism economy in Jackson and across the State of Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County assure both the stewardship and preservation of these nationally significant lands and the wildlife and natural resources they contain; and,

WHEREAS, Jackson and Teton County residents are actively collaborating among diverse interests and with public land managers to improve public land management and public access; and

WHEREAS, federal public land management agencies employ residents of Jackson and Teton County who are passionate and expert at their jobs, pay taxes, and contribute to our community; and

WHEREAS, Teton County's forests are naturally prone to fire, including periodic large-scale fires, as part of the ecosystem in which they have evolved over millennia, although a warming climate has accentuated the process; and federal money and expertise to suppress wildfires is essential to protecting our communities, infrastructure, and public lands; and

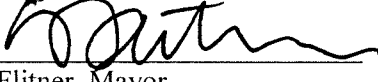
WHEREAS, continued federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County ensure public access to and environmental protection of these lands and the resources they contain,

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF JACKSON, WYOMING:

That the Jackson Town Council opposes any and all efforts by the State of Wyoming to obtain the wholesale transfer of federal lands in Wyoming to the State of Wyoming, That the Jackson Town Council strongly supports federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County and the incredible value federal lands bring to our county's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life.

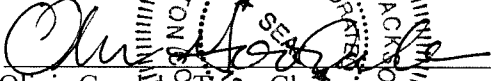
PASSED and APPROVED this 1ST day of June, 2015.

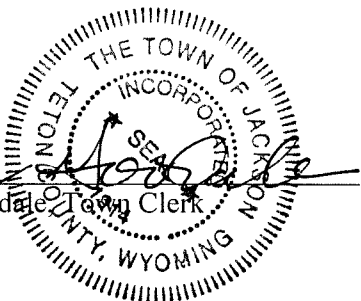
TOWN OF JACKSON

By: 
Sara Flitner, Mayor

ATTEST:

By:


Olivia Goodale, Town Clerk





2015-022

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF TETON COUNTY, WYOMING
RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF FEDERAL LANDS TO THE COUNTY'S ECONOMY,
RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE;
AND OPPOSING THE PROPOSAL FOR THE STATE OF WYOMING TO TAKE
WHOLESALE OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN THE STATE OF WYOMING**

WHEREAS, Teton County includes some of the most beautiful and iconic landscapes on Earth, most of which are federal public lands owned by all Americans; and,

WHEREAS, these federal public lands, which comprise 97% of the land area of Teton County, provide public recreational opportunities for residents and visitors for wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, backpacking, boating, riding snow machines and all-terrain vehicles, horseback riding, skiing, bicycling, sightseeing, and numerous other outdoor recreational activities; and,

WHEREAS, these federal public lands provide essential habitat for some of America's greatest wildlife populations; and,

WHEREAS, federal public lands in Teton County, Wyoming are the foundation of the tourist based economy in Teton County and across the State of Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County assure both the stewardship and preservation of these nationally significant lands and the wildlife and natural resources they contain; and,

WHEREAS, Teton County residents are actively collaborating among diverse interests and with public land managers to improve public land management and public access; and

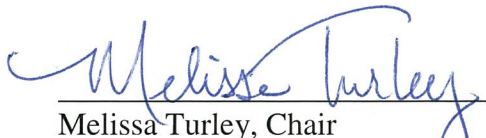
WHEREAS, federal public land management agencies employ residents of Teton County who are passionate and expert at their jobs, pay taxes, and contribute to our community; and

WHEREAS, Teton County's forests are naturally prone to fire, including periodic large-scale fires, as part of the ecosystem in which they have evolved over millennia, although a warming climate has accentuated the process; and federal money and expertise to suppress wildfires is essential to protecting our communities, infrastructure, and public lands; and

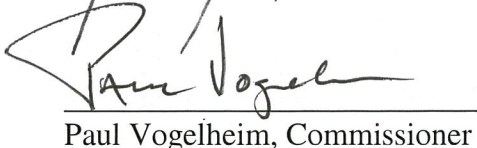
WHEREAS, continued federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County insure both public access to and environmental protection of these lands and the resources they contain.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE TETON COUNTY, WYOMING BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: that the Board of County Commissioners of Teton County, Wyoming opposes any and all efforts by the State of Wyoming to obtain the wholesale transfer of federal lands in Wyoming to the State of Wyoming, **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of County Commissioners strongly supports federal ownership and management of public lands in Teton County and the incredible value federal lands bring to our county's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life.


PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 19TH DAY OF MAY, 2015 IN TETON COUNTY, WYOMING


Melissa Turley, Chair

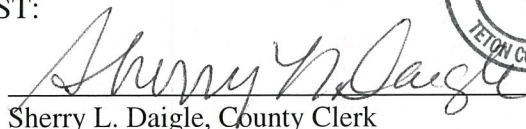

Mark Newcomb, Commissioner


Paul Vogelheim, Commissioner


Barbara Allen, Vice-Chair


Smokey Rhea, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Sherry L. Daigle, County Clerk

