

Public Policy Statement on Transfer of Public Lands

<https://www.alec.org/model-policy/public-policy-statement-transfer-public-lands/>

January 9, 2015 - Summary

Ninety-five state and locally elected officials joined a variety of experts from 14 states in Salt Lake City to draft and ratify a statement calling for land currently held by the federal government to be transferred to the states. This Draft Model Policy, ratified by unanimous consent on October 9, 2014 at American Lands Council (ALC) Multi-State Workshop convened in Salt Lake City, UT and on October 20, 2014 by ALC Board of Directors, resulted from that summit. This statement is supported by existing ALEC model policy and calls for the restoration to the western states their most basic right – control over their land with important exemptions for national parks, Congressionally-designated wilderness area, Indian reservations and military installations.

Model Policy

1. WE URGE THE TIMELY AND ORDERLY TRANSFER OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO WILLING STATES FOR LOCAL CONTROL THAT WILL PROVIDE BETTER PUBLIC ACCESS, BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, AND BETTER ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY;

2. WE SUPPORT EXCLUDING EXISTING NATIONAL PARKS, CONGRESSIONALLY DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS, INDIAN RESERVATIONS, AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS FROM THE TRANSFER; AND

3. WE SUPPORT EQUIPPING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES WITH RESOURCES NECESSARY TO PLAN FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO STATE-BASED OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSFERRED PUBLIC LANDS; AND

4. WE URGE MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES FOR THESE LANDS THAT WILL:

i. IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS: Protect public access, rights of way, and multiple-uses on public lands for all people including sportsmen, tourists, recreational users, subsistence and sustenance activities, and emergency access; and

ii. IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: Reduce catastrophic wildfire fuel loads that threaten communities, infrastructure, watersheds, critical wildlife habitat, and our environment. Facilitate restoration of healthy forests, range lands, and waterways; and

iii. IMPROVE ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY: Secure jobs and economic growth through responsible natural resource stewardship and use including tourism and recreational opportunities; and

iv. RETAIN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS: Federal public lands shall become state public lands to be managed in accordance with state and local plans; and

v. IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF WILDFIRE CONTROL: Provide state, local, and tribal government with adequate wildfire prevention and control resources and develop interstate/interagency cooperative agreements necessary to combat wildfires effectively; and

vi. INCREASE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY: Ensure state-based public land management activities are consistent with local government plans, policies, and objectives; and

vii. PROTECT USE RIGHTS: Protect all valid existing rights and multiple uses, and enhance the viability of compatible, land-based livelihoods; and

viii. PRESERVE CUSTOMS & CULTURE: Preserve and protect important wild, scenic, cultural and economic resources; and

ix. INCORPORATE FEDERAL AGENCY EXPERTISE: Seek to utilize federal expertise and research through employment and/or cooperative agreements; and

x. GENERATE SELF-SUPPORTING FINANCE: Foster compatible economic productivity to support essential government services such as local roads, utilities, emergency services, public health and safety, education, justice, and other civic functions while reducing tax burdens on citizens nationally and offsetting federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools funds.

Approved by the ALEC Board of Directors January 9, 2015.