



April 11, 2025

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Sent to –

Senators - John Boozman, Amy Klobuchar, Susan Collins, Patty Murray

Representatives – GT Thompson, Angie Craig, Tom Cole, Rosa DeLouro

We are aware of discussions in some circles of Congress about selling large amounts of the Federal estate in the budget reconciliation process. We are concerned that such proposals would be ill-advised, short-sighted, and detrimental to the interests of the American Public, and we unequivocally oppose selling our public lands for the purpose of deficit reduction.

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees and the Public Lands Foundation represent retired employees of the two largest land management agencies in the Federal government, USDA's Forest Service and USDI's Bureau of Land Management. Our collective experiences allow us to have an appreciation for the massive benefits that this nation realizes from our system of public lands, and we do not support their transfer or privatization.

Our public lands provide a tremendous array of goods and services, from valuable products such as timber, minerals, oil and gas, and livestock grazing, to countless opportunities for millions of Americans to enjoy outdoor recreation. In fact, public land is the foundation of the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy, supporting five million jobs throughout the country. In addition to serving as economic engines, these lands also provide communities and the nation with vital sources of clean air and water. Selling off public lands would threaten all these benefits and more.

**National Association of  
Forest Service Retirees**

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President Theodore Roosevelt had it right. Our public lands belong to all Americans and should be managed under federal protection. He acted to save America's diminished natural resources and brought 230 million acres of public land under protection as national forests, refuges, parks and monuments. Congress, in 1976 further acted to permanently retain the remaining public domain in Federal ownership with the passage of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act*.

These public lands are the envy of the world and are managed sustainably to provide continuing benefits far into the future. Go anywhere in America and one can enjoy the fruits of those wise decisions. If these lands should become privatized, the American public would lose many of these benefits and would pay dearly for it.

As always, we stand ready to work with you in the reconciliation process and other legislative approaches to achieve savings and improve the management of the public lands. But we do not support any proposal to transfer these lands out of the federal estate for the purpose of deficit reduction.

Sincerely,

*Steve Ellis*

Steve Ellis, Chair  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees

*Mary Jo Rugwell*

Mary Jo Rugwell, President  
Public Lands Foundation