

The “Lands Bill” Is Good for Our Community

Feb 12, 2020

Our local governments are working together on the Truckee Meadows Public Land Management Act (Lands Bill), an initiative to get local control of federal land to the east of Sparks and north of I-80. This initiative is modeled after a similar successful initiative called the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA). SNPLMA raised more than \$3 Billion since enacted in 1998, with much of that revenue going to state, local, and regional government entities for conservation and recreation.

So, what is this Lands Bill? Lands bills in Nevada are historically chartered by local governments to balance the needs for economic development with the preservation of public lands. Our Lands Bill addresses the significant growth experienced by our region and will provide resources for infrastructure preservation and enhancement. With 83% of Washoe County controlled by the Federal Government, there is limited land available for development or use by the community. This Lands Bill gives us a say in the use of some designated federal land, how it is sold, and how it is developed. The Lands Bill enables our local governments to manage our growth while addressing, with proceeds from the sale, many of our currently underfunded needs in the region. These needs include local infrastructure, open space preservation, and enhancements of our parks and trails.

Access to This Land is Important to Manage Growth. There is limited buildable land available to address our current and future housing and industrial development needs. This shortage of land causes many other problems for the region such as the lack of affordable housing due in part to the high costs of the available land. In addition, there is increased traffic congestion that comes with employees driving to the industrial areas further and further from their homes, as well as a growing number of housing developments that leapfrog the federal land and build housing in outlying areas that require longer commutes. This sprawl also has limited infrastructure like retail and health care, which increases traffic to these services, while stretching local government's support such as schools and public safety. Enabling development of the land closer to the urban core encourages infill development while maximizing the utilization of existing infrastructure.

Who gets the funding from the sale? Revenue from the sale of these federal lands will be split between the State of Nevada General Education Fund (5%), local governments (10%), and a "special account" available to the Secretary of the Treasury (85%). The special account can be used for things like; acquiring or maintaining parks, trails, and natural areas, acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, and other conservation initiatives. Proceeds from the sale of land in Washoe County will stay in Washoe County to benefit the residents here.

Win-Win for our community. We are faced with many challenges associated with our economic success as a community. The Lands Bill can help us address several of these challenges. Additionally, this initiative provides desperately needed funding to our local governments. It enables us to protect and enhance the environment by acquiring and preserving the most valuable land in the region. If the federal land in the Lands Bill is transferred to local governments or auctioned to private owners, Washoe County land will still be 81% federally

controlled. It's time we take control of more of the land in our County and use it to make our community even better!

For more information or to provide input during the public process go to www.landsbill.org