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Office of the Governor

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Nicole Cannizzaro, Majority Leader
Nevada State Senate
401 S. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701

The Honorable Steve Yeager, Speaker
Nevada State Assembly
401 S. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Majority Leader Cannizzaro and Speaker Yeager:

Since taking office, I have heard time and again the drastic need for housing in our state. The increasing costs – driven by inflation, higher interest rates, the growing cost of living, and a dwindling housing inventory – are placing an unbearable strain on the budgets of families across Nevada.

As you are aware, nearly 87% of Nevada's land is controlled by the federal government, significantly limiting developers' ability to increase the housing supply. Growth in many rural areas of our state is currently constrained by the lack of developable land. Projections indicate that Washoe County could run out of developable land by 2027, while Clark County may face the same challenge by 2032.

I have continued to engage with our federal delegation and the President on this issue, and I am seeking your support to advocate for the immediate and systematic release of federal land in Nevada. Enclosed, you will find a resolution outlining the challenges we face. I am hopeful that we can find a path forward together to address these issues for the benefit of Nevada's families.

As I emphasized in my State of the State address, I am committed to working across party lines with you and your colleagues to bring about meaningful change in our state and provide relief for hard-working families who are struggling. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this matter. My team and I stand ready to collaborate with you during this session to explore solutions that will enhance the quality of life for all Nevadans.

Thank you for your attention and partnership.

Sincerely,

Joe Lombardo
Governor

Draft Resolution Encouraging the Systematic Release of Federal Land in Nevada

SENATE [OR ASSEMBLY] CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. ____

WHEREAS, The federal government controls nearly 85 percent of Nevada’s land, placing the state in a uniquely disadvantaged position among its peers, stifling economic growth, restricting housing development, and impeding infrastructure expansion; and

WHEREAS, This federal land retention infringes upon Nevada’s sovereignty and equality as a state, contradicting the constitutional principle of equal footing and denying Nevada the same opportunities afforded to other states with minimal federal landholdings; and

WHEREAS, The federal government’s failure to systematically release these lands limits Nevada’s ability to generate revenue through property taxes, resource development, and economic diversification, forcing an overreliance on industries such as gaming and tourism; and

WHEREAS, Historical promises made during Nevada’s statehood, as outlined in the Enabling Act of 1864, explicitly recognized the need for federal lands to be systematically disposed of to promote the state’s development, a promise that remains unfulfilled and perpetuates an imbalance that hinders Nevada’s ability to provide for its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The underutilization and mismanagement of federally controlled lands have increased ecological risks, including wildfire threats, and limited opportunities for responsible development, which Nevada has demonstrated it can manage effectively through a balance of conservation and economic growth; and

WHEREAS, The scarcity of developable land has directly fueled a crisis of affordability, driving up housing costs, limiting opportunities for working families, and exacerbating economic disparities across rural and urban communities; and

WHEREAS, While the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 has established a precedent for responsible land transfers, its limitations and bureaucratic constraints have slowed the process and failed to address the scale of Nevada’s pressing needs; and

WHEREAS, Proposed legislation, including the Southern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act, the Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act, and the Truckee Meadows Public Lands Management Act, aims to address these concerns but has yet to be enacted into law, leaving significant gaps in meeting the State’s land and development requirements; and

WHEREAS, Federal inaction perpetuates economic stagnation and prevents Nevada from realizing its full potential as a state, while other states enjoy the benefits of greater autonomy over their lands; and

Draft Resolution Encouraging the Systematic Release of Federal Land in Nevada

WHEREAS, Nevada's bipartisan congressional delegation has shown leadership in advocating for these measures, but stronger and more immediate action is required to ensure equitable treatment for Nevada and address the systemic disadvantages posed by federal land policies; and

WHEREAS, The State of Nevada has consistently demonstrated its ability to act as a responsible steward of land, ensuring sustainable and effective management that benefits both economic development and environmental conservation; and

WHEREAS, Any systematic release of federal lands must also recognize the unique needs of Nevada's tribal communities, ensuring their rights and cultural heritage are respected;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the Nevada Legislature, in cooperation with the Governor of this State, unequivocally calls upon the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to take immediate and decisive action to facilitate the systematic and responsible release of federal lands in Nevada, in accordance with constitutional principles and historical commitments, to support development, housing affordability, and infrastructure expansion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Nevada Legislature urges Congress to adopt a timeline for land transfers that ensures measurable progress toward restoring Nevada's ability to develop and grow, and to prioritize bipartisan legislative solutions that address the inequities created by federal land retention and provide states like Nevada with the resources and autonomy necessary to thrive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Nevada Legislature and the Governor of this State stand ready to collaborate with federal agencies, local governments, and tribal communities to ensure that land transfers are conducted in a manner that balances growth with environmental stewardship and cultural preservation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States as President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage and approval.