

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Energy and Natural Resources

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources

RE: Keep Public Lands Sales Out of Budget Bill

Dear Members of the Senate,

On behalf of our members, we, the 113 undersigned organizations, ask you to prevent the sell off of federal public lands in the budget reconciliation bill.

House Natural Resources Committee members attempted to push through an amendment to the House Reconciliation bill that would have sold off over 500,000 acres of federal public lands in Nevada and Utah. Despite the attempts to do so at the last minute, under the cover of night, and without an opportunity for review by other members of Congress or the public, this amendment received robust bipartisan opposition and was ultimately stripped from the reconciliation text in the House Rules Committee, prior to the floor vote.

The language of the House amendment included no requirements for public use and no limitations on how the lands can be used once sold — meaning they may be developed for golf courses, luxury resorts, strip malls, private vacation homes, or simply flipped for sale again. Many of these lands, if sold, would fuel urban sprawl and the growth of extractive industries to the detriment of wild places and biodiversity. Some of the parcels listed for sale included acreage in designated Wilderness Areas, National Conservation Areas, and a number of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Several parcels included in the House amendment were adjacent to Zion National Park. Vast swaths of public land across southern and central Nevada, including pristine habitat for endangered species, were targeted. And some of the parcels in southern Utah appeared included solely to pave the way for the Lake Powell pipeline, which would exacerbate the water crisis on the Colorado River.

The public had no opportunity to participate in the process of identifying these parcels, let alone time to understand the long-term effect of selling off these public lands. Decisions about the future of public lands should remain in public hands.

Leaders in the House and Senate, extractive industry, and private developers are using the reconciliation process to sell off federal lands to pay for billionaire tax cuts. But such moves are deeply unpopular. Polling has repeatedly shown that the public—especially westerners—strongly believes in keeping public lands in public hands and, across partisan lines, rejects any efforts that would lead to the sale of these shared and cherished lands. The Senate should heed how dramatically unpopular this idea is and reject any misguided attempt to get public lands sales back in this bill.

It is imperative that the budget reconciliation process is not used to sell off public lands.

Sincerely,

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA)
Center for Biological Diversity
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Wisconsin
350Hawaii
Accountable.US
Accountable.US/Accountable.NOW
Alaska Wilderness League
Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
American Friends Service Committee
American Hiking Society
Amigos De Los Rios
Animal Welfare Institute
Anza Trail Foundation
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Arizona Faith Network
Arizona Trail Association
Back Country Horsemen of America
Back Country Horsemen of Utah - Southwest Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Utah, Wasatch Chapter
Californians for Western Wilderness
CalWild
Climate Justice Alliance
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Colorado Wildlands Project
Conservation Colorado
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Conserve Southwest Utah
Creation Justice Ministries
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice Action
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
EPIC- Environmental Protection Information Center
Evergreen Action
Forest Keeper
Forests Forever
FOUR PAWS USA

Friends of Big Ivy
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of the Earth
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project
Great Basin Water Network
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Heartwood
Honor the Earth
Hoosier Back Country Horsemen of America
I Heart Pisgah
Idaho Conservation League
Illinois Environmental Council
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
John Muir Project
Kids for Saving Earth
Klamath Forest Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper
Los Padres ForestWatch
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature For All
New Mexico Wild
Next 100 Coalition
North Country Trail Association
Northcoast Environmental Center
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Oregon Wild
Oregon-California Trails Association
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Partnership for the National Trails System
Project Eleven Hundred
Resource Renewal Institute
SAFE Alternatives for our Forest Environment
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
San Rafael Back Country Horsemen, Utah
Save Our Canyons
Save the Boundary Waters

Scenic Utah
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Utah Chapter
Silvix Resources
St. George Climbers Coalition
Standing Trees
Stewardship Utah
The Cougar Fund
The Ocean Project
The Wilderness Society
Trust for Public Land
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Uranium Watch
Washington Trails Association
Washington Wild
Waterkeeper Alliance
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Western Leaders Network
Western Watersheds Project
Wild Arizona
Wild Montana
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Workshop
Wildlife for All
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Wilderness Association
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates