

RE: Selling Off Public Lands Must Be Removed from Reconciliation Text

Dear Members of the Senate,

On behalf of our members, we, the 148 undersigned organizations, ask you to remove the unprecedented sell off of millions of acres of public lands in the budget reconciliation bill, the single largest attack on public lands in the history of this nation.

Chairman Lee wants to mandate the sell-off of millions of acres of public lands across 11 western states (UT, AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, NV, NM, OR, WA, WY). His legislative text would target both Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service land, and **mandates the sale of between 2 million and 3 million acres of public lands**. Senator Lee refused to provide details of his plan for weeks, even to fellow Senate Republicans. After releasing the bill text on the evening of June 11th, it was clear why: he wants to avoid any meaningful debate or public process on public land sell-off attempts that are deeply unpopular across the political spectrum, so unpopular that a similar attempt in the House of Representatives fell flat.

We strongly oppose any attempts to recklessly sell public lands through legislative shortcuts like budget reconciliation, which bypass public input, environmental review, and accountability.

Doing so threatens public access, undermines responsible land management, puts environmental values, cultural resources, and endangered species at risk along with clean drinking water for 60 million Americans and betrays the public's trust.

This bill will primarily benefit real estate developers and private-equity speculators rather than addressing real housing needs. While Senator Lee attempts to make his bill more palatable by claiming that it will create opportunities for affordable housing, it does no such thing. **There is no requirement that any housing built in response to this bill be affordable or meet any affordable housing requirements.** There is no provision to prevent lands sold under Lee's bill from being developed into high-end vacation homes, Airbnbs, or luxury housing projects, which would be especially desirable near scenic or high-demand areas.

Selling off public lands is short-sighted, self-serving and irreversible. These lands belong to all Americans. **Once they're sold, they're gone for good--fences go up, access disappears and they are lost to the public forever.** Westerners and people across the country overwhelmingly support the protection of public lands and have consistently rejected attempts to sell them off. Time and again, the public has made it clear: our forests, desert lands and open spaces are not and should not be for sale.

We urge all senators to oppose the final budget reconciliation if this language is not removed.

Sincerely,

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA)
Center for Biological Diversity

Natural Resources Defense Council
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350.org
Accountable.US/Accountable.NOW
Alaska Wilderness League
Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
Amigos De Los Rios
Animal Defenders International
Animal Welfare Institute
Anza Trail Foundation
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Arizona Faith Network
Arizona Trail Association
Amargosa Conservancy
American Friends Service Committee
American Hiking Society
American Rivers
Back Country Horsemen of America
Back Country Horsemen of Utah Mountain Ridge Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Utah Southwest Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Utah San Rafael Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Utah Uintah Basin Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Utah Wasatch Front Chapter
Bay Area Third Act
California Environmental Voters
California Native Plant Society
Californians for Western Wilderness
CalWild
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Relations LLC
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Colorado Wildlands Project
Conservation Colorado
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservation Northwest
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Conserve Southwest Utah
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Creation Justice Ministries
Defenders of Wildlife
Dolores River Boating Advocates
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Protection Information Center
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Ecoflight
Evergreen Action

Food & Water Watch
Forest Keeper
Forests Forever
FOUR PAWS USA
Friends of Big Ivy
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of the Amargosa Basin
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Clearwater
Friends of the Earth
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Great Basin Water Network
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
GreenLatinos
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Heartwood
High Country Conservation Advocates
High Desert Back Country Horsemen Chapter
I Heart Pisgah
Idaho Conservation League
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
John Muir Project
Justice Outside
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Klamath Forest Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Native Ecosystems Council
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature for All
Nevada Conservation League
New Mexico Wild
Next 100 Coalition
North Country Trail Association
Northcoast Environmental Center
Ocean Conservation Research
Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Oregon Wild
Oregon-California Trails Association
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Park County Environmental Council
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Physicians for Social Responsibility Sacramento
Protect Our Winters
Public Citizen

Quiet Use Coalition
Resource Renewal Institute
Rocky Mountain Wild
SAFE Alternatives for our Forest Environment
Sage Steppe Wild
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Save the Boundary Waters
Save Our Canyons
Scenic Utah
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Silvix Resources
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Southern Environmental Law Center
St. George Climbers Coalition
Standing Trees
Stewardship Utah
Surveyor222
SYRINGA networks
The Ocean Project
The Rewilding Institute
The Wilderness Society
Third Act Sacramento
Tuleyome
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Washington Wild
Waterkeeper Alliance
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Western Colorado Alliance
Western Leaders Network
Western Watersheds Project
Western Wildlife Conservancy
Wild Arizona
Wild Hope
Wild Montana
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Watch
Wilderness Workshop
Wildlife for All
Wolf Conservation Center
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Wilderness Association
Yellowstone Gateway Business Coalition