

Testimony of Douglas S. Foxley on H.R. 5751, Golden Spike
150th Anniversary Act, before the House Committee on Natural
Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands

May 22, 2018

Chairman Bishop, Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member
Hanabusa and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Douglas S. Foxley and I am the Chair of the Utah Transcontinental Railroad Celebration Spike 150 Commission to commemorate the “wedding of the rails” with the driving of the Golden Spike. The celebration at Promontory Summit will take place on May 10, 2019, in Congressman Bishop’s district. The Spike 150 Commission was established in early 2017 by an act of the Utah State Legislature and Governor of the State of Utah.

One of the most iconic and life-altering events in America’s history – the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad – happened in Utah on May 10, 1869. Through a series of activities and events, the Spike 150 Commission aims to inspire, educate, and reflect on the Transcontinental Railroad legacy as it unifies Americans to see that great things are possible with vision, hard-work, dedication, and collaboration.

As you know, but for the Civil War, this event was the most historic event of the 19th Century. It was at the time the equivalent of the moon shot. Ironically, a hundred years later

rockets made near the site by Orbital ATK allowed man to walk on the moon.

I was asked by Governor Gary Herbert to Chair this event and I asked Congressman Bishop's and my good friend Spencer Ficklin Stokes who is here today to Co-Chair this event with me. Mr. Stokes was at the 100th anniversary celebration, carried on his shoulders by his father to appreciate what it signified. At the 100th Celebration of the Driving of the Golden Spike, many federal and state dignitaries came to Promontory Summit along with John Wayne. Mr. Wayne will not be at the 150th celebration, at least I don't think so, but we invite you to join Congressman Bishop and the many other dignitaries slated to attend this landmark event next year.

To celebrate the 150th, Union Pacific is bringing in from Cheyenne, Wyoming two historic steam engines: the 4014, called "The Big Boy" because it is the largest steam engine ever built along with the 844. They will be at Ogden Union Station in the "Champagne Pose" where a large Gala will be held on the night of May 9th. The next day we will have a presentation from a world class historian at Promontory Summit and enjoy a performance by the world renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Utah Symphony, and a yet-to-be announced major guest artist. Yes, the actual Golden Spike will hopefully make it's reunion debut on site that day too.

In anticipation of the May 10th event, I met with Congressman Bishop and his staff almost a year ago where they suggested the idea of designating the current National Historic Site as a National Historic Park. Congressman Bishop charged me with getting all of the ranchers and adjacent landowners along with the elected Box Elder County Officials on board before proceeding with this initiative. I am proud to say that in working with Utah State Representative Scott Sandall, who brought the ranchers together and who also happens to be one of the adjacent landowners, we accomplished this task. This effort is supported by the Utah State Legislature, the Governor of Utah, and the entire Utah Congressional Delegation.

Why is this National Historic Park designation important? Why is this worth doing? In the history of our amazing country, this place, virtually unspoiled, recognizes that President Lincoln and others ‘thought big’. President Lincoln envisioned a transcontinental railroad and even though the Civil War was raging, he encouraged Congress to pass the Transcontinental Railroad Act in 1862 which they did. In fact, President Lincoln personally established the eastern terminus of the railroad, Mile Marker Zero, in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

After the Civil War, attention was focused on bringing this vision to life. Competing groups, one from the east, The Union Pacific, and one from the west, The Central Pacific Railroad, started their Race to Promontory and neither side at the time

knew where they would meet. Construction of this nationally unifying project was performed by many ethnic and cultural groups including the Chinese, African Americans, Irish, Mormon Graders, veterans of the Civil War from both sides, and many others. They were successful in achieving this amazing accomplishment with their picks and shovels, their horsepower, and black powder. The country was finally connected coast to coast by rail and telegraph. A journey from New York City to San Francisco now took only a week instead of months.

It is the hope of Mr. Stokes, myself, and the Commission that we will connect the next generation of young men and women who will be carried on the shoulders of their parents that day. We hope that they will take it upon themselves the duty and obligation to think big and find ways that we can continue to unite and connect this great country together but also to the entire world.

For this, along with many other reasons, the Commission to Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Driving of the Golden Spike overwhelmingly supports Congressman Bishop's H.R. 5751 redesignating the Golden Spike National Historic Site and establishing the Transcontinental Railroad Network. I hope that this Committee takes the appropriate action to make this happen thereby honoring and preserving this historic site and the effort by so many Americans to unite our nation by rail.