

**Statement for the Record
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands**

H.R. 3173, Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act

March 7, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this Statement for the Record on H.R. 3173, the Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act, which provides direction for the future management of Federal lands primarily in several northern Nevada counties. H.R. 3173 provides for the conveyance of at least 9,500 acres of Federal lands for a variety of public purposes and directs the sale at fair market value or, in some cases, exchange of up to approximately 356,100 acres of Federal lands. It also designates approximately 148,000 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as eight new wilderness areas; releases approximately 49,700 acres of existing BLM wilderness study areas (WSA); withdraws approximately 349,200 acres of Federal lands from mineral development and leasing; and takes nearly 2,700 acres of Federal lands into trust for the benefit of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.

Finally, the bill includes numerous miscellaneous provisions that establish a Federal complex for the offices of certain land management agencies, direct the issuance of corrective patents, provide for an existing right-of-way for the GreenLink Transmission Line on parcels previously taken into trust for the benefit of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, and amend a previously enacted land law affecting White Pine County.

The Department of the Interior (Department) supports the goals of the bill as they align with important Administration priorities. President Biden highlighted the importance of conservation in his America the Beautiful Initiative, and the bill's wilderness designations and withdrawal provisions support that effort. We also support the bill's provisions that align with priorities of the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to build healthy communities and economies. The Department continues to work to facilitate and improve access to public lands for Tribes and underserved communities. We are also working to improve public health, safety, and climate resiliency, while conserving public lands for future generations. We would like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee to address certain concerns with the bill as currently drafted, including creating new legislative maps for the bill's proposed designations, conveyances, and other land tenure actions.

The Department defers to the Department of Agriculture on provisions pertaining to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

Background

The BLM manages approximately 245 million surface acres, located primarily in 12 western states, and approximately 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. These minerals are overlain by properties managed by other Federal agencies such as the Department of Defense and USFS, as well state and private lands.

In 1976, with passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Congress directed the BLM to retain management of most public lands, which reduced the acreage that had in previous years been available for disposal. Under FLPMA, the BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. FLPMA also provides the BLM with a clear multiple-use and sustained yield mandate that the agency implements through its land use planning and management processes.

Public Land Sales, Exchanges, & Conveyances

Section 203 of FLPMA authorizes the sale of public lands when they are identified through a public land use planning process as meeting certain criteria that make them suitable for sale. Land sales conducted under FLPMA occur at the discretion of the Secretary and are made at fair market value in accordance with Federal law. Under current BLM policy, sales are generally conducted under competitive bidding procedures to ensure fair return. In such cases, sales are widely advertised through public notices, media announcements, and on appropriate BLM websites.

Similarly, the BLM uses land exchanges to ensure effective land management. Among other purposes, land exchanges allow the BLM to acquire environmentally sensitive lands while transferring public lands into non-Federal ownership for local needs and the consolidation of scattered tracts. The BLM conducts land exchanges pursuant to section 206 of FLPMA, which authorizes the agency to undertake such exchanges, or when given specific direction by Congress.

The BLM regularly leases and conveys lands to state, local, and Tribal governments and nonprofit entities for a variety of public purposes. These leases and conveyances are typically accomplished under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act or through direction supplied by specific Acts of Congress. Such direction allows the BLM to help states, Tribes, local communities, and nonprofit organizations obtain lands at nominal cost for important public purposes. As a matter of policy, the BLM generally supports legislative conveyances at nominal cost if the lands are appropriate for disposal, will be used for public purposes consistent with the R&PP Act, and if the conveyances include reversionary clauses to enforce this requirement.

H.R. 3173

Title I – Douglas County

Land Conveyances & Sales

Title I of H.R. 3173 directs the conveyance, upon request, of approximately 7,777 acres of Federal lands managed by the BLM and the USFS to Douglas County, Nevada, to be used for

flood control or any purpose consistent with the R&PP Act. Under the bill, the BLM and USFS would convey this land subject to valid existing rights. Although this title requires that the conveyance be made for no consideration, it requires Douglas County to pay for any costs related to the conveyance (*e.g.*, cultural and cadastral surveys). Title I also authorizes Douglas County to submit a request to purchase the reversionary interest in all or part of the land conveyed for the appraised fair market value of this interest and directs the Secretary to cover the costs of conveyance of the reversionary interest. If any of the unspecified acres is withdrawn by a Public Land Order, the Secretary is required to revoke the order to the extent necessary to permit disposal of the land.

In addition, Title I authorizes one or more sales of up to 10,031 acres of Federal lands, including the mineral estate, through a competitive bidding process at fair market value, subject to valid existing rights. Of these acres, 31 appear to be managed by the USFS, but the exact acreage and the referenced map do not explicitly identify the specific acres intended for sale. The remainder are unspecified acres of BLM-managed public lands that have been or will be identified as potentially suitable for disposal in the Carson City Consolidated Resource Management Plan, or in any subsequent amendments to that plan. The unspecified acres would be selected jointly by the BLM and the county to be offered to qualified bidders within one year of enactment. The bill also directs that not later than 30 days before any of the unspecified acres are offered for sale, the state or county may elect to obtain them for public purposes in accordance with the R&PP Act. In that event, the BLM would retain the elected lands for conveyance to the state or county.

Under Title I of H.R. 3173, proceeds from the proposed land sales would be disbursed to the state, county, and a special account in the U.S. Treasury to be used for a variety of purposes, including to reimburse costs incurred in the preparation of land sales and the trust transfers outlined in Section 121 of the title, and to acquire environmentally sensitive land, among others.

As a matter of policy, the BLM supports working with local governments to resolve land tenure issues that advance the public good. The BLM supports the goals of the public purpose conveyances contemplated in Title I, to the extent that they pertain to BLM-managed public lands, as they are generally consistent with the R&PP Act. The BLM is concerned, however, that the total acreage proposed for conveyance is larger than what is normally authorized for public purposes under the R&PP Act, which is limited to 6,400 acres to a state or political subdivisions of a state. Some of the lands to be conveyed also present recreation and resource management concerns. For example, certain parcels offer extensive off-highway vehicle and non-motorized recreational opportunities, including portions of the popular Tahoe to Pyramid Trail. In addition, existing grazing allotments would be affected, causing a reduction in the amount of grazing available to permittees. Finally, the BLM is aware that these conveyances are within an area with many cultural and paleontological resources. The BLM would like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee on boundary modifications to avoid these acreage, recreation, and resource concerns. We also recommend that the county assume the appraisal and other administrative costs associated with acquiring the reversionary interest, consistent with the county assuming the cost of survey and other administrative costs as part of the initial conveyance.

While the BLM does not object to the proposed land sales, we would like to work with the Sponsor and Subcommittee on minor and technical modifications to this title, including

amendments regarding how the funds for the special account are managed and the proposed uses of the account. Finally, the BLM notes that the deadlines provided by the bill will be challenging to meet given current resources, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Sponsor to establish more manageable timeframes. Specifically, 180 days is insufficient time to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable laws.

Land to be Held in Trust

Section 121 of Title I would direct the Secretary to take approximately 2,669 acres of Federal lands into trust for the benefit of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, subject to valid existing rights, in addition to any “Section 5 lands” as specified in the bill administered by the BLM or the USFS after enactment. In addition, this section permits the Secretary concerned, in consultation and coordination with the Tribe, to carry out any fuel reduction and landscape restoration activities on the land taken into trust that would benefit the Tribe, the BLM, or the USFS.

The BLM is committed to honoring our nation-to-nation relationship with Tribal Nations, strengthening Tribal sovereignty and self-governance, and upholding the trust and treaty responsibilities that are paramount to fulfilling our mission, and the BLM supports these provisions. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee on an amendment to the bill or to provide an updated legislative map to clarify the meaning of the term “Section 5 lands,” in addition to clarifying the Secretary of the Interior’s role in taking lands into trust for the benefit of the Tribe.

Designation of the Burbank Canyons Wilderness

Section 131 of Title I designates approximately 12,330 acres of BLM-managed public lands as the Burbank Canyons Wilderness and releases approximately 1,065 acres of the existing Burbank Canyons WSA from further study. The Burbank Canyons area is comprised of rugged canyons set in the Pine Nut Mountains. Riparian areas provide important habitat for wildlife, and steep, rugged ridges contribute to the area’s scenic beauty and the recreational experiences available to hikers, horseback riders, and hunters. The BLM supports the designation of the Burbank Canyons Wilderness and the release of the remaining portion of the WSA, but we would like to work with the Sponsor and Subcommittee to refine some of the language in this section. For example, the BLM recommends the use of language that has been used frequently as standard in other similar legislation for both the designation of the wilderness and the release of the WSA. The BLM would also like to work with the Sponsor to minimize the impact of wildlife management on wilderness character and update the referenced maps and ensure all areas to be designated or released are clearly delineated.

Title II – Incline Village Fire Protection

The BLM defers to the USFS on the conveyances proposed by Title II of the bill.

Title III – Northern Nevada Flood Protection and Management

Title III of H.R. 3173 would authorize the Department to convey parcels of Federal land managed by the BLM and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to the Truckee River Flood Management Authority (TRFMA) for flood attenuation and riparian restoration along the

Truckee River in Nevada. Under this title, the conveyances would be for no consideration, but TRFMA would be required to cover all conveyance costs.

While the BLM generally supports public purpose conveyances that are consistent with the R&PP Act, some of the parcels to be conveyed under this title include the Tahoe to Pyramid Trail, which is popular with the public. We would like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee on boundary changes or other modifications to this title to avoid potential impacts to the trail. We would also like the opportunity to develop an official legislative map for the conveyance.

The BOR does not object to the conveyances, but would like to work with the Sponsor to ensure reservation of an appropriate right-of-way for one of the parcels, and to make minor technical edits to the parcel descriptions and map references.

Title IV – Ruby Mountains Protection Act

H.R. 3173 provides for the withdrawal of approximately 309,272 acres of land managed by USFS in the Ruby Mountains Subdistrict of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and approximately 39,926 acres of land managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge from the operation of the mineral leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights and with an exception for noncommercial refuge management activities by the USFWS.

The refuge is a magnet for a wide diversity of wildlife and is strategically located along bird migration corridors serving both the Pacific and Central Flyways, which makes it one of the most important waterfowl nesting areas in the Great Basin and Intermountain West. The refuge is also key habitat for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse, while the fishery is popular with local anglers. The Department supports the provision and would welcome the opportunity to continue working with the sponsor and the Committee. The Department defers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding provisions affecting the management of lands administered by the USFS.

Title V – Carson City Public Lands Correction

Title V of the bill would direct the conveyance, upon request, of approximately 258 acres of Federal lands to Carson City, Nevada, at no cost to the city. While the legislative map and title are unclear, we believe that most of the identified acreage is managed by the BLM. This title explicitly authorizes the city to sell, lease, or convey all or part of the lands upon their receipt, and further directs that if the city sells the land, the city must sell the land at fair market value, with proceeds to be deposited in a special account created under the title. Under Title V, the special account could be used to reimburse the cost of any surveys and appraisals for lands that are conveyed to Carson City, and to conduct wildlife habitat and restoration projects in the city. Additionally, the account could be used for the development and implementation of comprehensive hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention projects and the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in the city, among other activities. The special account would be managed pursuant to an intergovernmental agreement between Carson City and the BLM.

In addition, this title provides for conveyance of unspecified acres of Federal lands to Carson City for expansion of a roadway and directs the BLM to dispose of approximately 28 acres of BLM-managed public lands, while allowing the city to retain certain easements for utilities. Further, Title V would direct the conveyance of approximately 17 acres from Carson City to the BLM, which the BLM is to dispose of in accordance with FLPMA.

Under FLPMA, the BLM generally requires fair market value for land leaving Federal ownership if not conveyed for a public purpose. While the BLM acknowledges the Sponsor's consideration for the disposition of proceeds generated by this title, the BLM notes that the actions directed by the title regarding realization of value if the County in turn sells the land may not be sufficient to ensure a fair return to the taxpayer for the lands conveyed or disposed out of Federal ownership. The BLM would also like to work with the Sponsor to update the referenced maps or create new maps, if necessary, that accurately depict the boundaries of the areas to be conveyed per the title. Lastly, the BLM notes that the timelines provided for the actions required by this title would be difficult to achieve, and we would like to work with the Sponsor to consider a more feasible deadline.

Title VI – Pershing County Economic Development

Checkerboard Land Resolution

Subtitle A of Title VI directs the sale, at fair market value or through an equal value exchange, of up to approximately 334,000 acres of BLM-managed public lands in Pershing County, Nevada, that have been identified as potentially suitable for disposal as part of the BLM's land use planning process. This subtitle further requires that all lands authorized for sale or exchange be appraised using mass appraisal methodology within one year of enactment and every five years thereafter. Subtitle A also requires that the Secretary offer to exchange all eligible land within one year.

In addition, this subtitle directs the sale for fair market value of select public lands in the county that are currently encumbered by a mining claim, millsite, or tunnel site to a qualified entity. The bill defines qualified entities as the owner or authorized leaseholder of the mining claims, mill sites, or tunnel sites currently existing on any portion of the lands to be sold. The qualified entity would assume all costs of the sales, including survey, appraisal, and administrative costs. Proceeds from the sales would be disbursed to the state, county, and a special account in the U.S. Treasury for several specific purposes, including reimbursing costs associated with preparing sales, habitat conservation and restoration, and securing public access to Federal lands, among others. Lastly, Subtitle A provides for the conveyance of ten acres of Federal land to county for use as a cemetery.

While the BLM generally supports the consolidation of public land to provide for more orderly land management while ensuring the conservation of natural and cultural resources, we also support a process that ensures a fair return to the taxpayer when public lands are conveyed, exchanged, or sold out of Federal ownership. The BLM recognizes the Sponsor's efforts to address the checkerboard pattern of landownership in this area, but we are concerned that the scope of the sales and transfers contemplated by this subtitle may be overly broad. The BLM

would also like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee to develop a legislative map depicting the lands proposed for sale or exchange under this subtitle.

Further, the BLM recommends that the Sponsor consider expanding the allowable uses for the proceeds deposited in the special account to include processing and managing conservation designations in the county; development of parks, trails, and natural areas in the county, pursuant to a cooperative agreement; capital improvements on Federal lands within the county; and reimbursement of any costs incurred by the BLM for oversight of expenditures from the account.

Finally, the personnel the BLM would need to process these land transfers are the same personnel currently employed in a wide variety of other vital land management issues, including processing renewable energy and transmission rights-of-way applications and land use authorizations for community needs. Therefore, the timeframes outlined in this subtitle will necessarily have consequences for a wide variety of other users of the public lands. The BLM would like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee on more manageable timeframes to implement the contemplated transfers.

Wilderness Areas

Subtitle B of Title VI provides for the designation of seven wilderness areas totaling approximately 136,600 acres of BLM-managed public lands. This subtitle would also release approximately 48,600 acres of public land from WSA status, allowing these areas to be managed according to the existing BLM land use plans. The seven new wilderness areas include the Cain Mountain Wilderness, which consists of approximately 12,339 acres; the Bluewing Wilderness, which consists of approximately 24,900 acres; the Selenite Peak Wilderness, which consists of approximately 22,822 acres; the Mount Limbo Wilderness, which consists of approximately 11,855 acres; the North Sahwave Wilderness, which consists of approximately 13,875 acres; the Grandfathers Wilderness, which consists of approximately 35,339 acres; and the Fencemaker Wilderness, which consists of 14,942 acres.

The new wilderness areas that would be designated by this subtitle, if enacted, would help protect fragile desert ecosystems while providing important habitat for Greater sage-grouse, pronghorn antelope, mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, and many other species of wildlife and plants. The proposed Mount Limbo Wilderness, for example, features a spectacular landscape of granite outcrops, basaltic flows, and alluvial fans that is perfect for backcountry exploration. The BLM supports each of these designations, as they would conserve habitat and provide excellent opportunities for hiking, hunting, rock climbing, camping, and horsepacking for those who wish to experience the solitude of rugged canyons and dramatic vistas of the Nevada desert. The BLM would like to work with the Sponsor and the Subcommittee on minor and technical amendments to this subtitle, such as the inclusion of wilderness designation language that has become standard for this type of legislation and updating the referenced maps to ensure all areas proposed for designation or release are clearly delineated.

Additionally, Section 622 of this subtitle allows for the construction of a temporary telecommunications device for law enforcement or agency administrative use in the Selenite Peak Wilderness. Any telecommunications device authorized under the section may not be placed for more than seven years. This section further requires that temporary

telecommunications devices and their placement must comply with the Wilderness Act, all applicable laws, and to the maximum practicable extent, be located in a manner that minimizes impacts on the recreational and other wilderness values of the area.

The BLM notes that as written, the provisions authorizing placement of temporary telecommunications devices in the Selenite Peak Wilderness contradict current law, regulation, and policy. Specifically, section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act prohibits such installations. The BLM would welcome the opportunity to work with the Sponsor to explore options that would help achieve the goals of the bill while complying with the Wilderness Act and related regulations. Potential solutions could include excluding the temporary telecommunications site from the wilderness boundary or providing for the site to be added to the Wilderness once the temporary use has ended. In addition, the BLM recommends reassessing the seven-year period provided to ensure it meets current needs.

Title VII – Federal Complex

Title VII of H.R. 3173 would require the Department to establish a Federal complex building in Reno, Nevada, that would house certain offices in Nevada for the BLM, BOR, USFS, USFWS, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Department supports the goal of increasing efficiencies as well as providing for ease of collaboration between Federal agencies. However, we are concerned that the practicalities and requirements of building a new multi-agency Federal complex, as envisioned in the bill, may not be an efficient use of resources given the scale of the proposal. For example, the operation of Hoover Dam requires BOR staff on-site. The Department looks forward to working with the Sponsor to explore alternative proposals and ideas for increasing the effectiveness of Federal land management agencies in the region.

Title VIII – White Pine County

Title VIII would amend section 312 of the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act (Public Law 109-432) to expand the categories for disposition of proceeds authorized by that law to include additional public services, as determined by the county. In addition, Title VIII would insert a deadline for the conveyance of BLM-managed public lands to White Pine County that were authorized by section 352 of Public Law 109-432 for the expansion of the Ely Airport, the expansion of the White Pine County Industrial Park, and for sale through a competitive bidding process for nonresidential development related to these two expansions. Per the provisions of this title, if the conveyances are not completed within 120 days of enactment of H.R. 3173, the BLM would be required to convey all right, title, and interest in those parcels to the county. It appears that this requirement would eliminate the reversionary requirement associated with these conveyances. Additionally, this title would amend section 352 of Public Law 109-432 to remove the competitive bidding process associated with the sales of conveyed land for nonresidential development and instead direct the county to use a process consistent with section 244 of the Nevada Revised Statutes. Lastly, this title would authorize the BLM to issue corrective patents of up to five acres in the county where surveying errors exist.

The BLM notes that all lands described in section 352 of Public Law 109-432 have already been conveyed, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Sponsor on technical

amendments to the title to ensure it reflects current land status. In addition, we are concerned that the reference to section 244 of the Nevada Revised Statutes would require the Federal government to interpret whether the county has complied with state law. The BLM also notes that the disposal method described in the Nevada Revised Statutes may not result in the highest price and greatest benefit to taxpayers. For these reasons, the BLM recommends that the Sponsor retain the competitive bidding process in the underlying law.

Finally, regarding the corrective patents referenced in this title, the BLM notes that the specified land is no longer under BLM jurisdiction. It is unclear whether corrective patents could be issued in this situation, and the 60-day timeline provided by the title is insufficient to allow for the necessary research to determine if the BLM can issue a corrective patent. The BLM welcomes the opportunity to work with the Sponsor to explore this issue further.

Title IX – Fernley Economic Development Act

The Fernley Economic Development Act, contained in Title IX, would convey approximately 12,085 acres of BLM-managed public lands to the city of Fernley, Nevada, for fair market value. This title directs gross proceeds from the sale, lease, or conveyance of this land to be deposited into the special account created by the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA).

The BLM understands the Sponsor's goal is to make public land available for acquisition to facilitate the growth of local communities that are surrounded by Federal lands. The BLM would welcome the opportunity to work with the Sponsor to address concerns with the large scale of the conveyances directed by the title. In addition, the BLM notes that approximately half of the acres to be conveyed under this title are currently identified as potentially suitable for disposal under the existing land use plan.

Title X – Conveyances to the City of Sparks

Under Title X of the bill, the BLM would direct the conveyance of 40 acres of BLM-managed public lands to the City of Sparks, Nevada, for the purpose of establishing a public cemetery. This title would also convey approximately 714 acres of BLM-managed public lands for the creation of two public parks for the city. Title X requires the City of Sparks to pay all costs associated with the conveyances, and the public lands conveyed for the development of the public parks would also include a reversionary interest.

The BLM generally does not object to the conveyances under this title. As discussed above, the BLM typically supports conveyances for specific public purposes that are consistent with the R&PP Act and include a reversionary interest. The BLM recommends the provision regarding the public lands conveyed for parks be amended to increase consistency with the R&PP Act. In addition, the BLM would appreciate the opportunity to develop an updated legislative map for these conveyances.

Title XI – General Conveyance Provisions

Title XI of H.R. 3173 would require the conveyance, upon request, of any public land within the State of Nevada that is leased, patented, authorized as a right-of-way, otherwise approved for use pursuant to the R&PP Act, FLPMA, NEPA, or any other applicable Federal law and has a

permanent public facility already constructed – or where such a facility may be constructed at some point in the future – to an eligible entity by a quitclaim deed. Eligible entities would include the State of Nevada, political subdivisions of the State, units of local government, or a regional governmental entity in any county in Nevada. Lands conveyed under this title would continue to have a reversionary interest held by the Department. As a matter of policy, the BLM generally supports public purpose conveyances that are consistent with the R&PP Act. However, the BLM has substantial concerns with the language in this title authorizing the required conveyances because it is overly broad and could have significant unintended consequences as currently drafted. The BLM would like to work with the Sponsor to better understand the intent of this title.

Title XI would also allow for the movement of sand and gravel resources by the non-Federal surface owners of land acquired by them from the United States under certain authorities if the movement is conducted to recontour or balance the surface estate or is disposed of at off-site landfills. In addition, Title XI would make a technical correction to the reference to the map associated with a conveyance of Federal Land in Storey County, Nevada, that was included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291). The BLM would welcome the opportunity to explore how to achieve the Sponsor’s goal of allowing the movement of sand and gravel to recontour or balance the surface estate belonging to non-Federal entities. The BLM does not support allowing sand and gravel resources to be transported for off-site use unless the BLM receives fair market value for the resource.

Title XII – GreenLink West Project

Lastly, Title XII of H.R. 3173 would allow the BLM to maintain the existing right-of-way for the GreenLink Transmission Line on the Walker Lake Parcel in Mineral County, Nevada, which was taken into trust for the benefit of the Walker River Paiute Tribe as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263). This title provides that the consent of the Tribe for the use of the parcel for the transmission project will be deemed to be obtained by the Department subject to review under NEPA, and further directs the Department to approve a right-of-way agreement between the Tribe and the project applicant as soon as practicable after the parcel is taken into trust and before commencement of project construction. This agreement must address applicable provisions under part 169 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations). The BLM supports these provisions, as they reflect the current and ongoing efforts to work with the Walker River Paiute Tribe to address the right-of-way.

Conclusion

The BLM appreciates the interest of the sponsor and the Subcommittee in these important public land management issues in northern Nevada, and we look forward to working further with you on them. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a Statement for the Record on H.R. 3173.

**Statement for the Record
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands**

H.R. 7332, Utah State Parks Adjustment Act

March 7, 2023

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this Statement for the Record on H.R. 7332, the Utah State Parks Adjustment Act. H.R. 7332 directs the Department of the Interior (Department) to convey several small, isolated parcels of public lands (approximately 510 acres) managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) within and around Antelope Island State Park and Wasatch Mountain State Park to the State of Utah at no cost. The legislation would consolidate land ownership within the two state parks, which would improve manageability, and dispose of isolated Federal parcels that are difficult to manage. The BLM supports the bill.

The bill also proposes the conveyance of Federally-owned parcels administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to the State of Utah for inclusion in Fremont Indian State Park. The Department defers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding provisions affecting the management of lands administered by the USFS.

H.R. 7332

The isolated Federal parcels within Antelope Island State Park total approximately 280 acres surrounded by the Great Salt Lake, and are inherently difficult to manage by the BLM due to location, small size, and lack of access. The isolated Federal parcels near Wasatch Mountain State Park are similarly difficult for the BLM to manage due to location, small size, isolation from other public land, and lack of access. The Federal parcels within and around the Wasatch Mountain State Park were first identified as potentially suitable for disposal to the state, and inclusion into the Wasatch Mountain State Park, in the BLM's Park City Management Framework Plan issued in 1975. Most of these isolated parcels are only accessible through Wasatch Mountain State Park. The Wasatch Mountain State Park conveyance would add approximately 230 acres to the state park.

The BLM welcomes the opportunity to work with the Sponsor to continue to define inholdings administered by the BLM for conveyance as proposed by the bill. The BLM is currently developing a supplemental survey plat to evaluate the complex mineral survey history of the area, develop accurate legislative maps, and ultimately execute the proposed transfer. Further, the BLM would like to work with the Sponsor to explore the potential transfer of additional nearby BLM-managed isolated parcels previously identified for disposal in BLM land use planning documents.

The BLM regularly transfers public lands to local governments and nonprofits for a variety of public purposes. These transfers are typically accomplished under the provisions of the

Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act or through direction from specific Acts of Congress. As a matter of policy, the BLM generally supports these legislative conveyances at no or low cost if the lands are appropriate for disposal and will be used for public purposes consistent with the R&PP Act.

The BLM understands that the proposed management of the lands for conveyance to the State of Utah for inclusion in the state parks would be for public purposes. The BLM would appreciate the opportunity to work with the Sponsor on legislative language ensuring that the management of the lands conveyed is consistent with the standards of the R&PP Act and addresses the costs of the conveyance. Additionally, the BLM would like to work with the Sponsor on a few minor technical modifications to the bill, and notes that the lands proposed for conveyance would require a patent or quitclaim deed per regulation and policy.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement for the record.