

# Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman  
Mark-Up Memorandum

November 3, 2017

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Steve Petersen  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 1800 (Rep. Rob Bishop)**, To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer certain Federal land to facilitate scientific research supporting Federal space and defense programs.  
**November 7 & 8, 2017; 1324 Longworth House Office Building**

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## Summary of the Bill

H.R. 1800, introduced by Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT-01) on April 11, 2017 authorizes the transfer of title to 80 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) property within the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, to the Utah State University Research Foundation, to facilitate the continued historical use of this property for space and scientific purposes.

## Cosponsors

None.

## Background

This bill authorizes the transfer of an 80-acre parcel of USFS land currently under the administrative control of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, but which is located outside of the actual Wasatch-Cache National Forest boundaries, to the Utah State University Research Foundation (a 501 (c)(3) non-profit), to facilitate the continued use of the property for scientific research in direct support of ongoing U.S. military research contracts. This parcel of land has been used since the early 1960's, pursuant to a conditional use-permit from the USFS, for NASA, the U.S. Naval Research Lab, as well as the Utah State University Space Dynamics Laboratory (SDL), in conducting scientific research.

The property's remote location, in sections 19 and 30, in Township 14 North, Range 5 East of the Salt Lake Base and Meridian, west of Garden City, Utah, as well as its high altitude, are conducive for atmospheric research using Meteor Wind Radars, an interferometric antenna array, and antenna arrays for ionosonde soundings. There is considerable non – Forest Service infrastructure investment already installed at the location, including various antennas, telescopes, equipment shelters and security fencing. SDL anticipates additional infrastructure investments at the site upon completion of the transfer.

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest placed this parcel on its disposal list in 2015 without notifying the permittees of its action or considering the legal or financial impacts of this action on the permittee. The parcel is non-administrative and the sale or disposal of the property to SDL, once placed on the disposal list, to allow it to continue to use the property for research under existing forest service authorities, is prohibited without authorizing legislation from Congress.

Unless Congress acts, the USFS lacks administrative authority to sell or otherwise transfer the parcel to SDL to allow for its continued historical use for scientific and space research. Infrastructure investments, largely funded by taxpayers under U.S. military research contracts, could be lost. Forcing SDL to find a new location and relocate its infrastructure would result in higher costs for taxpayers, and research program disruptions.

### **Major Provisions**

- Authorizes the transfer of an 80-acre parcel of USFS land currently under the administrative control of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest to Utah State University Research Foundation (a 501 (c)(3) non-profit), to facilitate the continued use of the property for scientific research in direct support of ongoing U.S. military research contracts.

### **Cost**

A CBO cost analysis has not yet been completed for this bill.

### **Administration Position**

The Administration position is unknown at this time.

### **Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)**

None