

Committee on Resources, Subcommittee on Forests & Forest Health

[forests](#) - - Rep. Scott McInnis, Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515-6205 - - (202) 225-0691

Witness Statement

Statement of Congressman Chris Cannon

Hearing on Ephraim City Land Exchange (H.R. 1772)

July 26, 2001

Mr Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today on H.R. 1772, the Ephraim City Land Conveyance Bill. This bill will effect a land conveyance from the United States Forest Service to Ephraim City, Utah.

Ephraim City was founded in 1854 by American and Scandinavian pioneers. These settlers transported rocks into the valley and constructed a secure fort. This secure fort drew many other settlers, and eventually evolved into the modern city of Ephraim.

The administrative buildings of Ephraim City were built in the 1930s with a rock and mortar foundation. Unfortunately, the foundations are crumbling. In fact, in one part of the city office, the floor slopes approximately six inches over a twenty foot span.

For the past five years, the City has been looking into obtaining better city offices to house the legislative, administrative, and public safety functions and staff of the City. They have evaluated many alternatives to correct this problem, including restoration of the current building. The city leaders have come to the conclusion that the only feasible and cost-effective alternative is to raze the current building and construct new offices in its place. The new building will be in keeping with the community's Scandinavian heritage.

In order for the city to construct these new buildings, the city must obtain a small amount of Forest Service land, located directly behind the current offices. This land currently has several small buildings used as seed storage space. Among other things, this land would serve as a parking lot, and provide additional space for construction staging activities.

Ephraim City is willing to exchange 3.2 acres of land located in its industrial park for the seven tenths of an acre of Forest Service land. The Forest Service would continue to issue a special use permit for the industrial park land to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The Division has recently been evaluating alternatives for increasing their seed storage space. They would like to build a state of the art seed storage and mixing facility in Ephraim City. The transferred land would provide that opportunity.

As the City began working with the local Forest Service, it became clear that an exchange could not be administratively achieved in time for the City to replace its buildings. When you live around this much federal land, even the simplest transactions can be complicated.

I understand that the Forest Service has some concerns regarding the legislation as drafted, including concerns over NEPA exclusion language and equal value provisions. I had thought that such provisions would help to expedite this critical trade. However, I will be happy to work with the Forest Service to resolve these concerns. In fact, we have already initiated appraisals of both parcels and expect to have

results before we come back from the August recess.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you on this legislation and thank you once again for holding this hearing.

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