



Memorandum

TO: Vail Town Council

FROM: Community Development Department

DATE: August 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 27, Series of 2016; a Resolution stating the value of public lands to the Town of Vail's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life, and supporting continued federal ownership of federal public lands, and setting forth details in regard thereto.

I. SUMMARY

At the request of the Vail Town Council, staff proposes for adoption Resolution No. 27, Series of 2016, in opposition of the transfer of ownership of federal public lands to the states.

II. THE ISSUE

What is the Federal Lands Transfer Movement?

There has been a national movement organized by the American Lands Council and others over the last several decades to transfer the oversight of federal land to states that has recently gained traction as 10 of the 11 Western states have commissioned or considered studies to look into hypothetical federal-to-state transfers, and Congress recently appropriated funds to do so.

Who is in support of the Movement?

Much of the support originates in Utah, where local control of public lands could provide more state control and profit from increasing oil and gas development in these areas. Advocates of transfers support the states' ability to sell land to private entities, potentially benefitting the ranching and grazing communities in addition to the extractive industry.

Who is Opposed?

Many Western communities and counties including those in Colorado: Pitkin, Park, Eagle, Boulder, La Plata, San Miguel, Ouray, Summit and San Juan, are opposed to the movement. A transfer of ownership of publically managed lands to the states would shift the burden of funding to state agencies who do not have the capacity or the expertise to support these operations, and opens the door for a sell-off of public lands, limited access and devastation of habitat. Because states are mandated to manage their state trust lands in such a manner that these lands generate the maximum revenue possible for schools and other public institutions in the state, logging, energy development and the leasing of the land to private entities for the purpose of generating revenue may take precedence over outdoor recreation. Hunting, fishing, biking and environmental organizations are vehemently opposed to the transfer of public lands.

For more information:

<https://www.hcn.org/articles/many-rural-counties-actively-oppose-a-federal-lands-transfer>
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/this-land-is-whose-land.aspx>

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Vail Town Council approve Resolution No. 27, Series of 2016.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

A. Resolution No. 27, Series of 2016