

Points you can consider using when speaking to Legislators about SJR 3 – Public Lands Constitutional Amendment

- **This bill lays the foundation for state takeover of our national public lands – something that Wyoming people have consistently opposed** and demonstrated through polls, rallies, emails, resolutions, petitions and by hundreds showing up at interim committee meetings. We echo the excellent comments submitted by the Sweetwater County Commission: *“The constitutional amendment requests residents to approve the management of federal lands that may be transferred to the state without first asking if they approve such a transfer.”*
- **This bill is not needed. There is no rush.** Proponents argue that these federal lands could be forced on us, and so we must prepare. If Congress would ever consider ceding federal lands to the states, we would have ample notice and opportunity to pass state laws, if necessary.
- **This is a budget buster and bad fiscal policy.** The state would suffer severe financial consequences due to the high costs of managing transferred lands. We’d have to grow state government, hire staff, put in place new laws while bearing the enormous costs of forest fire control, road maintenance and other expenses. The state’s own two-year \$75,000 study drew these same conclusions.
- **The bill is based on debunked legal arguments.** Proponents use legal arguments to support their case, including the “equal footing doctrine,” but these rationales have been thoroughly refuted by Wyoming’s Attorney General, the Legislative Service Office attorneys, Governor Mead and a recent report by the Western Attorneys General.
- **This bill has been rammed through the committee without adequate public process.** An amendment to our state’s constitution, and especially on a topic this controversial – is big deal. There should be widespread public meetings across the state with adequate notice and opportunity for public comment. Instead, this bill was dropped on the public at the 11th hour with no committee background discussion, little notice and severely restricted public comment. The committee has disregarded all public opposition.
- **This bill sends a dangerous message to Congress.** By laying the foundation for wholesale transfer, we are saying that Wyoming supports such a land transfer. This empowers special interests in Congress that are pushing this political agenda.
- **The bill language is vague enough to allow for sale of public lands, long term leases and loss of public access, based on the unpredictable interpretations of future legislators.** The state does not have the administrative experience or capacity to manage these lands, it lacks environmental analysis laws, and does not have a track record in multiple use management and in balancing competing uses. For example, access to a blue-ribbon trout fishery might get destroyed due to another’s claim of public access and road building for minerals development.
- **This bill is a polarizing distraction from our state’s real challenges** and we need to work together to focus on more pragmatic, constructive solutions. The state’s \$75,000 study had many recommendations for currently-available collaborative and workable options.

