PREVENTING PUBLIC LANDS SELL-OFFS

Failed: 48-51

SUMMARY:

The Senate rejected an amendment that would have prohibited selling off public lands for budgetary purposes (*April 5, 2025, Roll Call No. 181*).

BACKGROUND:

America's public lands, including national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, encompass some of the nation's most treasured natural and cultural resources. These landscapes provide essential habitat for countless species and support migration corridors and breeding grounds that wildlife depend on for survival. Public lands provide opportunities for outdoor recreation including activities such as hiking, wildlife photography, hunting, and fishing. In addition, public lands generate billions of dollars in revenue for state and federal governments each year and bolster local economies through tourism and job creation.

During budget reconciliation negotiations in Congress, a major point of contention centered on proposals to sell or transfer portions of public lands. Some lawmakers viewed public lands as assets on the federal balance sheet, or as a means of generating revenue to offset tax cuts and reduce the federal deficit. The repeated attempts to include public lands sell-off in reconciliation faced intense backlash from conservationists, outdoor recreationists, and constituents across the country.

Senator Hickenlooper (D-Colo.) offered an amendment, S. Amdt. 2107 to S. Amdt. 1717 to H. Con. Res. 14, the budget reconciliation bill, to ensure that public lands are not sold off to reduce the federal deficit. The amendment would create a deficit-neutral reserve relating to preventing the use of proceeds from public lands sales to reduce the federal deficit. The amendment would disincentivize using the sale of America's public lands as a budgetary tool, helping to protect wildlife and habitat by keeping public lands under federal stewardship.

OUTCOME:

On April 5, 2025, the Senate rejected S. Amdt. 2107, 48-51. "Yes" was the pro-conservation vote.