

## Letter in opposition to land grabs by Federal Government - Trent Loos

Thank you, to this committee, for listening to information about the erosion of property rights to not only Kansas land owners but those around the globe.

It has been suggested that a couple people are making too much out of nothing when it comes to the land grabs that we see happening in the Great Plains of America. Let me remind you that it was not that long ago we were faced with the premise of "Buffalo Commons."

The concept, back in the day, was strange that ownership of land by individuals instead of the Buffalo was somehow dangerous.

*The Buffalo Commons is a cultural and social movement for positive, restorative social and ecological change on the Great Plains.*

What I contend today is that we are revisiting this challenge from the 1980's that man is responsible for destroying the biodiversity of the plains. However, facts actually document that land **ownership** and management by man has greatly improved every aspect of a healthy ecosystem. One only needs to look at the 1 of every 3 acres of land in this country that are owned by the government to see the proof that private ownership is far superior in terms of the ecosystem and the environment.

While I admit the new path to controlling the land today is not through outright purchase or eminent domain but rather to control by placement into a conservation easement. I will include the dangers of a National Heritage Area designation as someone other than the owner of the land has a say in how management takes place.

Let's take a real look at what is happening in that regard today.

On top of the 654,885,389 acres, or 29% of the total land in the U.S. currently owned by the federal government plus the 4.5% owned by individual state governments, land trusts now control 37 million additional acres through conservation easements. The majority of this land is controlled by large, national environmental agencies such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC), who control 15 million acres of that 37 million acre total.

In addition Trust for Public Lands, Ducks Unlimited, The American Farmland Trust and The Conservation Fund as other large land trusts, that combined, control 10 million of those 37 million acres.

Clearly land easement and "trust" payments are not benefiting the landowners or the local community as we see The American Farmland Trust and The Conservation Fund take in \$1 million and \$3 million annually in federal grants, respectively. The TNC receives an alarming sum, exceeding \$100 million, of our tax dollars.

I would also like to call your attention to the fact this is not some "local designation" to preserve the history and heritage of the region. Rather, it is a global effort to remove

land ownership no different than what we saw in the Bolshevik Revolution of the early 1920's.

On Jan 27, 2021 Biden signs Executive order 140086 Section 216 I:

*The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall, as appropriate, solicit input from State, local, Tribal, and territorial officials, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders in identifying strategies that will encourage broad participation in the goal of conserving 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.*

All of that follows, in lock step with the United Nation's call to control 30% of the earth's land and oceans by 2030.

NRDC issues call to action:

*Crucially, leaders must adopt and implement a target to fully and highly protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean and 30 percent of land areas and inland waters by 2030 through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative, and well-connected systems of protected areas.*

Oceans United followed suit:

*The 30x30 global movement has grown from strength to strength, with more than 100 countries committed to 30x30 and billions of dollars pledged to achieving this goal.*

And on Dec 6, 2021, this announcement marching to the same beat:

*The Bezos Earth Fund announced it awarded 44 grants totaling \$443 million to organizations focused on climate justice, nature conservation and restoration, and tracking critical climate goals. The grants include \$130 million to advance the Justice40 initiative in the U.S.; \$261 million to further the 30x30 initiative to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030, with a focus on the Congo Basin and Tropical Andes; and \$51 million to support land restoration in the U.S. and Africa. These grants are part of the Bezos Earth Fund's \$10 billion commitment to fight climate change, protect and restore nature, and advance environmental justice and economic opportunity.*

At the end of the day, I think it is incumbent on the local governments to abide by the Constitution of the United States and protect the citizens of the local region. In closing, I must echo the sentiments of Governor Pete Ricketts speaking of the proposed National Heritage Area designation on the Kansas/Nebraska border when he said the designations come with "unquantifiable and unknowable risks" and such action could change the landscape forever.