

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 718

To prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from transferring certain Federal land, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 23, 2025

Mr. ZINKE (for himself and Mr. VASQUEZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from transferring certain Federal land, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Public Lands in Public
5 Hands Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act, the term “publicly accessible tract”
8 means a tract of Federal land managed by the Secretary

1 of the Interior or the Chief of the Forest Service that can
2 be accessed by public road, public trail, public waterway,
3 public easement, or public right-of-way.

4 **SEC. 3. RESTRICTION ON TRANSFER OF CERTAIN FEDERAL**
5 **LAND.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior and
7 the Secretary of Agriculture are prohibited from transfer-
8 ring title to Federal land to a non-Federal entity, if the
9 Federal land is—

10 (1) a publicly accessible tract; or

11 (2) contiguous with—

12 (A) a publicly accessible tract; or

13 (B) a tract of land that—

14 (i) is owned by a State, county, or
15 municipal government; and

16 (ii) can be accessed by public road,
17 public trail, public waterway, public ease-
18 ment, or public right-of-way.

19 (b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to
20 a transfer—

21 (1) of Federal land that is—

22 (A)(i) less than 300 acres; or

23 (ii) less than 5 acres and accessible
24 via a public waterway; and

1 (B) authorized to be transferred under and
2 subject to the Federal Land Policy and Man-
3 agement Act of 1976;

4 (2) authorized by—

5 (A) the Southern Nevada Public Land
6 Management Act of 1998;

7 (B) the Sisk Act (16 U.S.C. 479a);

8 (C) Public Law 85–569, commonly known
9 as the “Townsites Act of 1958”;

10 (D) the Small Tract Act of 1983;

11 (E) the Act of May 17, 1906, commonly
12 known as the “Native Allotment Act of 1906”;

13 (F) Public Law 85–508, commonly known
14 as the “Alaska Statehood Act of 1959”;

15 (G) the Alaska Native Claims Settlement
16 Act;

17 (H) the Alaska Native Vietnam-era Vet-
18 erans Land Allotment Program authorized by
19 section 1119 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Con-
20 servation, Management, and Recreation Act;

21 (I) the Recreation and Public Purposes
22 Act; or

23 (J) the Weeks Act of 1911;

24 (3) explicitly authorized by Federal law; or

1 (4) completed through a land exchange author-
2 ized by Federal law.

3 (c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall not subdivide
4 Federal land to meet acreage minimums described in sub-
5 section (b)(1).

6 **SEC. 4. STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.**

7 Nothing in this Act shall be used to influence or in-
8 terpret the legality of stepping over a property corner from
9 one parcel of public land to another.

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