

# House Joint Memorial 2

Sponsored by Representatives WILSON, WHISNANT; Representative ESQUIVEL (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges President and Congress to transfer title of certain federal public lands to State of Oregon.

## JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas more than 32 million acres, constituting 52.3 percent, of the land base in Oregon is owned by the federal government; and

Whereas Oregon has 13 national forests covering more than 14 million acres, or nearly one-quarter of this state's land mass; and

Whereas Oregon also has the federally re-vested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands, covering 2.4 million acres across 18 counties in a checkerboard array with private lands; and

Whereas Oregon has 15.7 million acres that are managed by nine federal Bureau of Land Management districts over a variety of landscapes, including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, wetlands and nonforested deserts; and

Whereas the State of Oregon manages the same variety of landscapes on state lands; and

Whereas congressional budget reductions have significantly diminished the capacity of federal land management agencies to fulfill their responsibilities; and

Whereas federal nonmanagement of federal lands has stopped progress on the overlapping values of economic growth, social good and healthy ecosystems and has created catastrophic fire conditions on these lands; and

Whereas 40 percent of Oregon forestland is at high risk for a catastrophic fire; and

Whereas in 2013, the State of Oregon had to pay an extra \$40 million for fire suppression; and

Whereas the statewide gross expenses incurred for large fires during the 2015 fire season approached \$97 million, only a portion of which was reimbursable; and

Whereas the State of Oregon is pursuing the strategy of collaborative processes and state investments to increase the pace and scale of federal forest treatment, but the state's present pace is at least two-thirds too slow to address treatment needs long-term; and

Whereas in Oregon, state forest management has resulted in more than \$46 million annually in revenue to forest trust land counties from managing merely three percent of the forestland base; and

Whereas management of private forestlands under the Oregon Forest Practices Act has resulted in a sustainably harvested range of 2.5 billion board feet to 3.5 billion board feet annually from 34 percent of the forest landscape, in contrast to the 400 million board feet harvested from 60 percent

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 of the federal forestlands; and

2 Whereas as a direct result of nonmanagement of federal lands, unemployment rates in federal-  
3 land-dominated counties have consistently been the highest in this state, including 2015 unemploy-  
4 ment rates of 14.0 percent in Grant County, 12.2 percent in Wallowa County, 10.6 percent in Harney  
5 and Crook Counties and 9.9 percent in Curry County; and

6 Whereas nearly one in five people lives in poverty in Oregon's noncoastal counties; and

7 Whereas the American County Platform of the National Association of Counties states that  
8 "every state should receive everything that was promised to them in their enabling acts, including  
9 land transfers, if requested by an individual state with consultation with the affected counties"; and

10 Whereas other western states with large amounts of federal land ownership are considering or  
11 have begun a study of the legal, economic, social and practical benefits and risks associated with  
12 the transfer of federal lands to the states; and

13 Whereas a potential transfer of federal lands to the State of Oregon should not include any  
14 national parks, lands designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System under the  
15 Wilderness Act of 1964, lands belonging to an Indian tribe that are held in trust by the United  
16 States, lands affirmatively ceded to the United States by state statute and national monuments; now,  
17 therefore,

18 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

19 That we, the members of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, urge the President and the  
20 Congress of the United States of America to transfer title to all federal public lands within Oregon's  
21 borders, except national parks, lands designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation  
22 System under the Wilderness Act of 1964, lands belonging to an Indian tribe that are held in trust  
23 by the United States, lands affirmatively ceded to the United States by state statute and national  
24 monuments directly to the State of Oregon; and be it further

25 Resolved, That we strongly urge the members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation to do all  
26 in their power to secure the passage of legislation that transfers these public lands directly to the  
27 State of Oregon; and be it further

28 Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to  
29 the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the United States  
30 Secretary of the Interior, to the United States Secretary of Agriculture, to each member of the  
31 Oregon Congressional Delegation and to the Governors and the presiding officers of the legislatures  
32 of the 49 other states.

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