

BENNETT COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. 4-2021

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S "30 X 30" LAND PRESERVATION GOAL

WHEREAS, Bennett County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of South Dakota for which the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Bennett County containing about 761,320 acres of land situated in Southwestern South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the federal government owns 25% of the land within Bennett County, which is Tribal land under the Authority of the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe which totals 188,538 acres of these federal lands; and

WHEREAS, the LaCreek Wildlife Refuge is prominent protected federal land at approximately 16,566 acres for a total of 2% of Bennett County land; and

WHEREAS, that leaves approximately 556,061 acres (nearly 73% percent) of privately owned land in Bennett County to bring in revenue; and

WHEREAS, the well- being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the County, its businesses, and its citizens depend on private land ownership and the use of these resources; and

WHEREAS, many of Bennett County's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize private lands and their resources, including but not limited to livestock grazing, farming, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the South Dakota economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Bennett County and its citizens, therefore taking another 30% of Bennett County land would have a devastating impact on the County as a whole; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619); and

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the "30 x 30" program; and

WHEREAS, under the 30 x 30 program, some 680 million acres of our Nation's lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in its natural state, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources; and

WHEREAS, there is no constitutional or statutory authority for the President, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, or any other federal agency to set aside and permanently preserve 30 percent of all land and water in the United States, and no such authority is referenced in Executive Order 14008; and

WHEREAS, placing private lands into permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economies of many states, including South Dakota, and in particular rural counties such as Bennett County whose citizens depend on private lands for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at 216(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant federal agencies to “submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Bennett County, South Dakota, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation’s lands in its natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The Board further opposes the designation of lands in Bennett County as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued private ownership of land in the County, recognizing the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber.
4. The Board recognizes and supports the State of South Dakota’s water rights system, and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under South Dakota law.
5. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global greenhouse gas emissions policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities, but opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program’s objectives.
6. The Board also maintains that any lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program’s objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on

the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Bennett County, its businesses, and its citizens.

7. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior and all other relevant Federal and State agencies; and

DATED this 21st day of April, 2021.

ATTEST:

[Signature] Angela Hill
Clerk of the Board



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BENNETT COUNTY, STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

By: [Signature] Jeff Slattery, Chairman

Upon motion duly made and seconded the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the following vote: All Voted Aye.

Commissioners:

Jeff Slattery [Signature]
Rod Kirk [Signature]
Judd Schomp [Signature]
David Bakley [Signature]
Cole Blu Donovan [Signature]