

Resolution No. 2021- 011

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE “HALF EARTH,” “30 X 30,” AND “AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL” PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTING CONTINUED PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND

WHEREAS,

1. For some years, on an international level, there have been environmentalist proposals similar to a leading one called “Half Earth.”¹

2. Half Earth refers to permanently locking up half of the earth’s land and water against any use by human beings by 2050.

3. The theory of Half Earth is that permanently locking up half of the earth is necessary as a last-minute desperate measure to avoid climate change catastrophe, to save millions of species from extinction, and thereby save ourselves. The Half-Earth Project says, “The extinction rate is 1,000 times higher than before the global spread of humanity. As human impact on the environment grows, associated species loss compromises the stability of our planet.”²

4. For some years, on an international level, there have been intermediate proposals similar to a leading one called “30 x 30.”

5. 30 x 30 refers to permanently locking up 30 percent of the earth’s land and water by 2030 as an interim goal toward permanently locking up 50 percent.³

6. The theory of 30 x 30 is that permanently locking up the earth to the scale of 30 percent on the time frame of less than 10 years by 2030 is necessary to barely avoid the immediate environmental crisis.⁴

7. In 2019 the Center for American Progress published a report supporting 30 x 30 titled “How Much Nature Should America Keep.” The overview provided with the press announcement of the report said, “A good answer to this question starts with a commitment to protecting 30 percent of U.S. lands and oceans by 2030.”⁵ The Center’s webpage announcing the publication of the report quotes ecologist Edward O. Wilson, author the book *Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life*, as saying the Half Earth prescription is “the only way to save upward of 90 percent of the rest of life.”⁶

8. Following publication of that report, measures were introduced in the United States Congress calling for 30 x 30. In the Senate, one of the co-sponsors was then-Senator Kamala Harris. In the House of Representatives, one of the co-sponsors was then-Representative Debra

Haaland. President Joseph R. Biden selected Senator Harris as his running mate for Vice President and President of the Senate, and he selected Representative Haaland as Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, a key department for 30 x 30.

9. On January 27, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008 titled “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad” which, among other things, adopts 30 x 30.⁷

10. The Executive Order directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and the heads of other relevant agencies to submit a report within 90 days of the order recommending steps that the United States should take to achieve the goal of “conserving” at least 30 percent of U. S. lands and waters by 2030.⁸

11. The Executive Order is silent about what “conservation” means.

12. The Executive Order is silent about where the Administration plans to get the 30 percent of American land to lock up.

13. The report submitted in obedience to the Executive Order does not answer either of those questions, and Administration officials now say it is too difficult to define “conservation,”⁹ but they plan to do it, whatever it is.

14. The Administration has not answered questions from state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, fishermen, and other stakeholders. For some examples,

- A. They have not provided a scientific basis for a claim that unless we permanently lock up 30 percent of America in 9 years, more than one million species will become extinct.
- B. They have not provided an explanation of why, if the land that would be lost to development by 2030 would be 11 million acres, we must dictate the permanent lockup of 681 million more acres beyond the 274 million acres already deemed permanently protected. The gap between the 11 million acre loss and the 681 million acre lockup is well beyond fuzzy math.
- C. They have not provided a scientific explanation of how locking up 30 percent of American’s land in 9 years will cure the immediate climate crisis. In other words, they have not shown that locking up America will not all have been for nothing, environmentally speaking.
- D. They have not answered questions 15 Governors asked President Biden in their letter to him in April 2021. The letter noted that very little information is being shared with states.¹⁰
- E. In response to a letter dated March 16, 2021 from 62 members of the U. S. House

and Senate requesting that the White House provide a briefing to Congress, the White House staff on April 14, 2021 provided a ten-minute presentation and a round of questions, during which they said that what the President means by “conservation” of land in his Executive Order is too difficult to define.

15. The so-called “science” that has been offered to justify 30-percent lockup of America as an interim goal toward a 50-percent lockup is not standard science based on such procedures as hypothesis testing, empirical observation, and repeatable experimental results. It is “models” that foreordain the conclusions by presupposing the assumptions fed into them: garbage in, garbage out. Most of the citations to supposed “science” are to press releases and opinion papers by environmentalist groups. The few references to actual scientific papers do not prove the core claim of 30 x 30 that human use of land threatens millions of species or that locking up 30 percent of America in 9 years will cure the climate crisis.

16. The Administration has promised environmentalists that they will use “every tool in the toolbox” to lock up 30 percent of America’s land including not only removing federal lands from human use, but new measures in conservation programs, new federal land acquisitions, and an array of other tools.

17. The Executive Order cites no constitutional, statutory, or other lawful authority for the President to dictate 30 x 30.

18. The Administration has provided no answers to questions about the lawfulness of the President’s dictate.

19. A groundswell of grassroots local opposition to 30 x 30 has arisen beginning in the center of the country and spreading outward.

20. Already as early as April 8, 2021, the Nebraska and Kansas State Attorneys General co-signed a letter to the Secretary of the Interior putting the Administration on notice that they are prepared to defend their states’ and landowners’ property rights against 30 x 30.

21. Already as early as April 21, 2021 15 Governors had signed a joint letter to the President that Section 216 of the Executive order “infringes on the sovereignty of states and rights of the citizens.”¹¹

22. The letter was signed by our Montana Governor Greg Gianforte and by the Governor of our neighbors in North Dakota, Doug Burgum.

23. Our Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen has said that he also will defend Montana and its citizens against 30 x 30.

24. U. S. Senators from the following states have announced their opposition to 30 x 30: Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Tennessee, Georgia, Idaho, Utah, and Alaska.

25. U. S. Representatives from the following states have announced their opposition to 30

x 30: Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, and Alaska.

26. Montana U. S. Senator Steve Daines voted no on the confirmation of 30 x 30 proponent Debra Haaland as Secretary of the Interior.¹² In the online copy of his press statement concerning his no vote, Senator Daines includes a link to video of his examination of Haaland in her confirmation hearing. In that video, Senator Daines opposes 30 x 30 and challenges Haaland's support of it and her having been the chief proponent of it in the House of Representatives.¹³

27. Montana's U. S. Representative Matt Rosendale has announced his opposition to 30 x 30. He co-signed a letter from Representative Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member of the Committee on Natural Resources, to Secretary Haaland dated April 14, 2021 opposing 30 x 30, asking questions, and raising issues about non-answers from the Administration.¹⁴ He is reported as saying 30 x 30 is an "arbitrary top-down government mandate. Locking up millions of acres of land with unclear goals in mind would result in countless negative impacts on both our economy and our environment."¹⁵

28. On February 16, 2021, the County Commissioners of Garfield County, Colorado passed a resolution opposing 30 x 30.

29. Since that first county resolution, more counties, soil conservation districts, water conservation districts, and regional governmental associations have adopted resolutions opposing 30 x 30. Forty-one such resolutions have been adopted and 10 more are in the resolution-making process.

30. In Montana, the Valley County Commissioners¹⁶ and the Pondera County Commissioners¹⁷ adopted resolutions opposing 30 x 30, and the Missouri River Basin Cooperative State Grazing District¹⁸ has adopted a resolution opposing 30 x 30.

31. In Richland County, ranchers, stockgrowers, farmers, public figures, and other citizens have raised awareness about 30 x 30¹⁹ and opposition to it is growing as people learn about it.

32. Following the widespread and growing opposition to 30 x 30 across the country, the Administration has rebranded and begun re-marketing it as the "America the Beautiful Initiative." This is an appeal for political support in urban areas from people who have no skin in the game. They own none of the land that the Presidential dictate would permanently lock up.

33. In the rebranding, America the Beautiful claims:

A. 30 x 30 is a local initiative.

B. Permanently locking up land or water is voluntary.

34. 30 x 30 is not a local initiative. It originated as an interim goal of the global

environmentalist Half Earth proposal. The current administration unilaterally repealed a former provision that local governments could veto major federal land acquisitions in their jurisdictions. This repeal removed local government control of permanently locking up land and water.²⁰

35. Viewing 30 x 30 in the full context of the Administration's other policies, it becomes clear that just as the meaning of words like "conservation" is kept mushy, the meaning of "voluntary" when the Administration uses that word is not what the people of Richland County mean by "voluntary." For example, the Administration's policy of eliminating stepped-up basis for tax purposes on the event of death would force farmers, ranchers, and others to sell parts or all of their land to pay hugely increased taxes. Selling the farm to be permanently locked up because of a tax gun-to-the-head is not voluntary. That is a land grab.

36. 30 x 30 is contrary to the rights, interests, history, heritage, way of life, children, and grandchildren of Richland County's citizens and to the interests of Richland County as a local government.

37. 30 x 30 is supported by groups like Defenders of Wildlife who already sought to destroy Richland County's freedom, way of life, and economy by its federal lawsuit to abolish irrigation from the Intake Diversion dam on the Yellowstone River,²¹ though the dam was authorized by Congress²² and re-paid for by Richland County farmers.²³ Defenders of Wildlife continues to threaten Richland County by its support for interference at critical times with irrigation from the Missouri River by altering releases of water from the Fort Peck Reservoir.

38. Because the rebranding of 30 x 30 tries to sell it as a local initiative, it is essential that Montana's Governor, Senators, Representative, Attorney General, Legislators, and others know they have the local support of Richland County as they defend us by their opposition to 30 x 30. This resolution can help them refute the false claim that 30 x 30 is a local initiative.

39. Another feature of the rebranding is that instead of submitting 30 x 30 to Congress in a single bill identified as such, the Administration will follow a different tactic of implementing "death by a thousand small cuts." It will endorse apparently scattered and separate bills, issue executive orders, issue secretarial orders, shift enforcement approaches on things like conservation contracts, and many other separately small tactics, like an army in a thousand uniforms marching under a thousand flags. This is done so that no piece is recognized as or called 30 x 30, and therefore individual pieces are not opposed based on the unpopularity of 30 x 30.

40. Regarding habitat and welfare of species, the better managed land in Montana is privately owned land, and the land most poorly managed is under management by federal agencies and environmentalist elites. Montana's private landowners have provided the best habitat while producing the necessary food, fiber, minerals, and energy to support life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

41. 30 x 30 is an accusation that the landowners of Richland County are unable or unwilling to care properly for the land, which we find to be simply not true.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Richland County, State of Montana this 21st day of June, 2021, that:

1. **Opposition to 30 x 30.** We oppose the 30 x 30 program, every other similar program by any name, all separate parts or pieces of such programs, and Executive Order 14008.

2. **30 x 30 Termination Act.** We support passage of the “30 x 30 Termination Act” introduced in the United States Congress by Mrs. Representative Lauren Boebert. We urge Senator John Tester, Senator Steve Daines, and Representative Matt Rossendale to work for the passage of that act, to introduce additional measures heading in the same direction, and work for their passage.

3. **Private Property Rights.** We support continued private ownership of land in Richland County and the private use of land in support of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Enabling Act,²⁴ Montana’s Compact with the United States,²⁵ and the Constitution of Montana.

4. **Montana Water Rights Law.** We recognize and support the State of Montana’s water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and oppose any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the county that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Montana law.

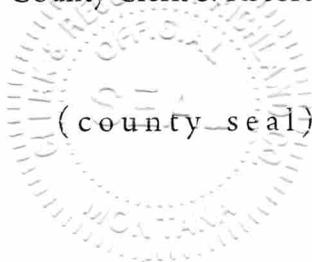
5. **Support for Our Leaders.** We support Governor Greg Gianforte, Attorney General Austin Knudsen, Senator Steve Daines, Representative Matt Rosendale, Senator Steve Hinebaugh, and Representative Brandon Ler for the efforts they already have made to oppose 30 x 30 and encourage them to continue their efforts. We urge Senator John Tester to defend Richland County by opposing 30 x 30, and if he does, we resolve to help and support him in the effort.

Effective Date. This resolution shall be immediately effective upon passage, approval, and adoption.

Attest

Stephanie Verhasselt
Stephanie Verhasselt *Chief Deputy*
County Clerk & Recorder

Duane Mitchell
Duane Mitchell
Chairman



Votes: 3 for
_____ against
_____ absent
_____ abstaining

1. The first part of the document is a letterhead containing the name of the organization and its address.

2. The second part of the document is a list of items, each with a corresponding number and description.

3. The third part of the document is a table with columns for item number, description, and quantity.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names, each followed by a signature and a date.

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18. The eighteenth part of the document is a list of names, each followed by a signature and a date.



¹ See e.g., Edward O. Wilson, *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), ISBN 978-1-63149-082-8 paperback.

² “Scientists for a Half-Earth Future,” Half-Earth Project, <https://www.half-earthproject.org/scientists/> (accessed June 4, 2021).

³ “Thirty by Thirty--an interim goal toward protecting Half of Nature,” *Words of the Wild*, Newsletter of the Sierra Club’s California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, Vol. XXII, No. 3, December 2019, <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/WOW-December-2019.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2021).

⁴ “How Much Nature Should America Keep?,” Center for American Progress, August 6, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2019/08/06/473242/much-nature-america-keep/> (accessed 6-3-2021).

⁵ “How Much Nature Should America Keep?,” <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2019/08/06/473242/much-nature-america-keep/> (accessed June 3, 2021).

⁶ “How Much Nature Should America Keep?,” Center for American Progress, August 6, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2019/08/06/473242/much-nature-america-keep/> (accessed 6-3-2021) (citing Edward O. Wilson, “The Global Solution to Extinction,” *The New York Times*, March 12, 2016, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/opinion/sunday/the-global-solution-to-extinction.html>).

⁷ 86 Fed. Reg. 7,619 (Vol. 86, No. 19, Monday, February 1, 2021).

⁸ § 216(a).

⁹ White House staff response to letter dated March 16, 2021 by 62 members of the U. S. House and Senate asking for a briefing.

¹⁰ “Fifteen State Governors Respond to President Biden's Aggressive 30 by 30 Plan,” Protect the Harvest, provides full text and a PDF file of the letter, <https://protecttheharvest.com/news/open-letter-to-president-biden-about-30-by-30/> (accessed June 3, 2021).

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¹² “Daines Votes No on Haaland Confirmation,” Press Statement, March 15, 2021, <https://www.daines.senate.gov/news/press-releases/daines-votes-no-on-haaland-confirmation> (accessed June 3, 2021).

¹³ The Press Statement says, “To watch Round Three of the hearing exchange on Haaland’s 30 X 30 Initiative and balancing multiple-use, click [HERE](#),” providing the link <https://www.dropbox.com/s/mh4zexmmtznggez/02.24.21%20Haaland%20Questions%20Whole%20.mp4?dl=0> (accessed June 3, 2021).

¹⁴ Letter from Representative Bruce Westerman to Secretary Haaland, April 14, 2021, https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2021-04-14_westerman_et_al_to_haaland_doi_re_30_x_30_engagement_session.pdf. (accessed June 3, 2021).

¹⁵ “GQP Whines 30 X 30 Lands Plan Lacks Details; Provide Nothing In Their Turn But Same Cliches,” Democratic Underground.com, <https://www.democraticunderground.com/1127144853> (accessed June 3, 2021)

¹⁶ Resolution No. 12-2021, April 21, 2021.

¹⁷ Resolution #38 – 2020/21, May 19, 2021.

¹⁸ Resolution Opposing the Federal Government’s “30 x 30” Land Preservation, April 29, 2021.

¹⁹ “Meeting Set To Explain The Biden Administration's 30 X 30 Program, Sidney, June 2,” *The Roundup*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.roundupweb.com/story/2021/05/26/news/meeting-set-to-explain-the-biden-administrations-30-x-30-program-sidney-june-2/15469.html> (accessed June 3, 2021).

²⁰ Rescission of Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3388.

²¹ *Defenders of Wildlife v. United States Army Corps of Eng'Rs*, U. S. Dist. Ct., Dist of Mont., Great Falls Division, CV-15-14-GF-BMM, *Defenders of Wildlife & NRDC v. United States Army Corps of Eng'rs*, 730 Fed. Appx. 413, U. S. Ct of App., 9th Cir., No. 17-35712, No. 17-35713, 730 Fed. Appx. 413, 2018 U.S. App. LEXIS 8558, 86 ERC (BNA) 1177, 2018 WL 1615962 (unpublished decision).

²² 33 Stat. 1045.

²³ Written notice dated May 3, 1978 from the Acting Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of Interior, addressed to the President of Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District No. 1, the United States acknowledging “that construction charges due the United States under Contract No. Ilr-103 dated September 23, 1926, are completed.”

²⁴ The Enabling Act by which Congress enabled Montana to be a state in the Union requires that Montana’s “constitution . . . not be repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and the principles of the Declaration of Independence.” Act of February 22, 1889, Ch. 180, 25 Statutes at Large 676, Section 4.

²⁵ Montana’s Compact with the United States set forth in the Constitution of Montana provides that “All provisions of the enabling act of Congress . . . continue in full force and effect.” Constitution of Montana (1972), Art. I.