

Resolution #21-12

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

WHEREAS on January 27, 2021, the Biden Administration issued Executive Order 14008, also known as the 30x30 program directing the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and other senior officials to "conserve" at least 30% of all lands and waters within the United States by the year 2030;

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at Sec. 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."

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, the withdrawal of some 680 million acres of federal lands from multiple use and placement of such lands in permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economics of many midwestern states, including Nebraska, and in particular rural counties such as Gage County whose citizens depend on access to federal lands for their livelihoods; and,

WHEREAS, Gage County is one of the largest counties in Nebraska, containing about 550,400 acres of land situated in southeast Nebraska; and,

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, is likely to cause significant harm to the economy of Gage County, and injure the County's businesses and its citizens by depriving them of access to public lands and preventing the productive use of these lands' resources, including but not limited to: livestock grazing, agricultural and horticultural activities, oil and gas exploration and production, mining and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting or other outdoor recreation; and,

WHEREAS, designating lands as wilderness does not assure its preservation. Left in an undisturbed or natural state, these lands are highly susceptible to wildland wildfires, insect infestation, and disease, all of which degrades the natural and human environment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Board of Supervisors of Gage County, Nebraska, 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 public lands and national forests in Gage 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 management of the public lands and the national forests under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber, and in careful coordination with Gage County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies, as required by law.
4. The Board supports maintaining and enhancing public access to public lands and national forests while opposing road closures, road decommissioning, moratoria on road construction, and other limitations on public access for the purpose of fulfilling the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
5. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Nebraska's water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation 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 Nebraska law.
6. 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.
7. The Board supports any conservation programs designed to temporarily remove land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and create wildlife habitats as long as it contains a sunset date with no hidden clauses or stipulations that would designate it permanently.
8. The Board maintains that the designation of public lands and national forest lands as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives may lawfully occur, if at all, only through the planning process mandated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (for public lands) or the National Forest Management Act (for national forest lands), including public notice and an opportunity to comment, analysis and disclosure of the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Gage County, its businesses, and its citizens, and careful coordination with Gage County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies.

9. The Board also maintains that any non-federal 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 in full of the 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 Gage County, its businesses, and its citizens.
10. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture and all other relevant Federal and State agencies.

DATED this 14 day of July, 2021.

Motion made by Dorn, seconded by Byars to adopt the foregoing Resolution.

All members present as listed and voted as follows:

Aye: Durgens, Harby, Tiemann, Dorn, Byars

Nay: Schuller

ATTEST:

Cawn Hill  
Gage County Clerk

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF  
GAGE COUNTY, STATE OF NEBRASKA  
Carl Tiemann  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors