

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-11

WHEREAS, The County of Lincoln, Nebraska (hereinafter “Lincoln County”) is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Nebraska for which the Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County contains about 1.6 million acres of land situated in west central Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, the federal government currently owns a negligible amount of land in Lincoln County, amounting to less than 1% of the total land area; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County currently enjoys numerous privately and publicly administered parks, wildlife management areas and recreational areas, as well as numerous privately held conservation easements; and

WHEREAS, designating lands as wilderness does not assure its preservation. Left in an undisturbed or natural state, these lands are highly susceptible to wildfires, insect infestation and disease, all of which degrades the natural and human environment; 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 Lincoln County’s businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize private lands and their resources, including large scale and family ranching and farming operations, which are themselves traditionally exceptional stewards of the land; and

WHEREAS, these industries are vitally important components of the Nebraska economy and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Lincoln County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Aboard (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 Nebraska, and in particular rural counties such as Lincoln County whose citizens depend on private lands for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, will conflict with the plans, policies and programs of Lincoln County as expressed in the Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan; 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 Lincoln 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 privately owned lands.

2. The Board further opposes the designation of lands in Lincoln 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 at the hands of the Federal Government.

3. The Board supports the continued private ownership of land in Lincoln 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 Nebraska's water rights system, including the doctrine of first in right, first in time 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.

5. The Board 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 for full and fair market value for the rights and interests acquired, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Lincoln County. The Board categorically opposes any such acquisitions made through regulatory compulsion or federal mandate.

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

A motion was made by County Board member Brunns, seconded by County Board member Woodruff to approve and adopt this herein Resolution (Resolution No. 2021- 11).

Upon roll call Brunns, Woodruff, Hewgley, Henry, Weems voted "aye." Nays 0.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOTE OF 5 to 0 on this 12th day of April, 2021.

WHEREUPON the Chairman declared this herein Resolution (Resolution No. 2021- 11) duly adopted, passed and approved this 12th day of April, 2021.

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN,
IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Kent Weems
KENT WEEMS, CHAIRMAN

Bill Henry
BILL HENRY, COMMISSIONER

Christopher Brunns
CHRISTOPHER BRUNNS, COMMISSIONER

Jerry Woodruff
JERRY WOODRUFF, COMMISSIONER

Joseph Hewgley
JOSEPH HEWGLEY, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Rebecca J. Rossell
Rebecca J. Rossell
Lincoln County Clerk

