

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

COUNTY OF UNION

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-40

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

WHEREAS, Union County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of New Mexico for which the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Union County contains approximately 2,451,800 acres of land situated in the Northeast corner of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the federal government owns 0.24% of the land within the County, and the United States Forest Service is responsible for managing over 58,700 acres of these federal lands; and

WHEREAS, approximately 1,933,300 acres (nearly 79 percent) of land is privately owned in Union County; and

WHEREAS, the Kiowa National Grasslands, Capulin National Monument, and Clayton State Park and Dinosaur Trackways are all located in Union County; 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; 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 Union County's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize private lands and their resources, including livestock grazing, farming, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the New Mexico economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Union 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 New Mexico, and in particular rural counties such as Union 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 Union County as expressed in Ordinance 1995-17, Union County Interim Land Use Plan Ordinance adopted April 20, 1995 which obligates the federal government to coordinate its policy development with Union County; 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 Union County, New Mexico, 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 Union 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 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 shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior and all other relevant Federal and State agencies.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF UNION COUNTY, STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Justin Bennett, Chair

Walter C. Hall

Walter Hall, Member

ATTEST

Brenda Green, County Clerk