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House BLM Land Grab Hearing (HR 2016) On Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

Congress Considers Huge BLM NCLS Land Grab

Plans To Put Into Law The Babbitt National Conservation Lands System (NCLS)

This Essentially Places A National Park Type Overlay Over Millions Of Acres Of BLM Land. You know that will hurt multiple-use and private property.

Sorry For The Late Notice, But We Were Only Notified On Thursday, the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Democrats Are Now In Charge And They Are Deliberately Trying To Give As Late A Notice As Possible For Each Hearing

CONGRESS SEEKS TO CODIFY NEW NCLS LAND GRAB -- (From Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter); Seventeen House members from both parties teamed up in April to introduce legislation (HR 2016) that would give the National Landscape Conservation System official Congressional certification.

The system, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), was created administratively by former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt during the Clinton years.

In June 2000 the Interior Department under the guidance of former Secretary Babbitt established the 26 million acre NCLS in BLM to protect special areas.

The NCLS consists of major conservation areas in 12 western states, including 15 national monuments, 13 national conservation areas, Steens Mountain area in Oregon, Headwaters Forest Reserve in northern California, 36 wild and scenic rivers, 148 wilderness areas, 4,264 miles of national trails, and more than 600 wilderness study areas.

Making the NCLS permanent threatens recreation, access, grazing, mining, oil and gas and many other uses. Gradually these areas will be turned into parks with traditional uses strangled and roads cut off. Private property owners and inholders in the areas can say so long to their property rights. You will see new areas nominated for NCLS status gradually eroding BLM multiple-use.

Four Democratic senators introduced counterpart legislation (S 1139) April 18. Said chief sponsor of the Senate bill, Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), "Given the broad public support for these areas, I expect this bill to be non-controversial and it is my hope that it will be able to move quickly through the Congress and enactment into law." Bingaman chairs the Senate Energy Committee. Non-Controversial?

The four lead House sponsors of HR 2016, all co-chairs of an NCLS caucus, are Reps. Mary Bono (R-CA), Rick Renzi (R-AZ), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) and Jim Moran (D-VA). Reps. Bono and Renzi need to receive lots of contacts. The others are not likely to change their position.

Creating this massive new conservation area program (read land grab) will take money especially from the National Park Service that is way behind in deferred maintenance and other uses. The NCLS will eventually become a huge new agency with thousands of additional bureaucrats added over time.

Any promises made when these areas like Steens Mountain and the Missouri Breaks National Monument as well as the Grand Staircase National Monument and many others were created will be conveniently forgotten as more and more regulations are added. The NCLS will become park-like and be gradually managed like a park. Gradually existing uses will be strangled out of existence.

Supporters of the NCLS insist they are not competing with other conservation programs for fiscal 2008 appropriations. One said, "We do want to see a shift in the funding priorities of the BLM itself. Specifically, the oil and gas program of the BLM has become the dominant program of the BLM at the expense of some the best lands and waters of the American West."

It is the nature of the Congressional appropriations beast that money for all programs in the Interior appropriations bill comes out of the same pot and the programs compete with each other.

One of the sponsors of the bill to codify the NCLS, Sen. Ken Salazar (D-CO), said the measure would not affect management of lands or existing rights or public access. Added Salazar, "The bill does, however, recognize that these landscapes are of great interest to the American people and should be managed to protect their values." Does anyone believe setting up the NCLS would not change the management of these areas? If that were true, why would Congress want to do it?

American Land Rights will be sending out thousands of faxes, letters and e-mails to alert landowners, rural communities and allies about the danger and work to build more allies in the new Congress to stop the NCLS from passing. ALRA needs your support to defeat the massive new NCLS.

It is critical that private property owners and Federal land users make a big push now to head off this attack on private property and access to Federal lands. It is so much cheaper to fight it early than to wait for the details. Hit it hard now. Call, write and fax your Senators and Congressman. You may call any Congressman and Senator at (202) 225-3121.

#### \*\*\*\*\*ACTION ITEMS

#### \*\*\*\*\*What You Should Do Now!

----1. Call your Congressman today to urge him to attend the hearing on Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup> and oppose this BLM Land Grab. Call any Congressman at (202) 225-3121.

----2. Write your Congressman by e-mail or fax and tell him or her to oppose the NCLS Land Grab. The Bill number is HR 2016 Write: Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Send it by fax or e-mail. Mark it Testimony on HR 2016.

----3. E-mail a copy to the Minority Staff (casey.Hammond@mail.house.gov)

Be sure to label your e-mail in the subject line as Testimony on HR 2016. If you can send it by Thursday, the 7th that would be great. If not, you have 10 work days after the hearing (2 weeks) to send your testimony for the record.

----4. Send a copy of your testimony or letter to both your Senators. Write: Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510. You may call any Senator at (202) 224-3121.

House National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee. All can be called at the Capital Switchboard at (202) 225-3121. You can fax the committee office at (202) 226-7736

Minority Members (Republicans)

Ranking Minority Member: Rob Bishop (R-UT) Fax: (202) 225-5857  
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Majority Members (Democrats):

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With the new Congress now largely controlled by the greens, we've all got our work cut out for us. Your support will allow us to compete effectively.

Let's keep private lands and Federal lands available for private hands and reduce regulation.

Sincerely,

Chuck Cushman

Please forward this message as widely as possible.