

December 6, 2021

To the:
Special Committee on the Federal 30 x 30 Initiative

Here I am today to ask this special committee to take a serious look at what 30 x 30, America the Beautiful, would mean for Kansans, but especially for farmers and ranchers that own approximately 97% of the land in the state. These same farmers and ranchers provide food, not only for Kansans but for the United States and the World. These same farmers and ranchers have taken care of the land they own for decades and in some instances centuries. To not take care of their land would have ended in disaster for them and their families but quite possibly for what they contribute in food supplies to the world. Yes, they have taken advantage of techniques prescribed by universities and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. However I am beginning to hear reports from Colorado and Montana about how the federal government is increasing payments to farmers and ranchers if they will continue to keep their land in programs that remove it from production. These payments are at a rate higher than what the landowner is asking from their current lessor making it difficult for the landowner to turn down and making it equally difficult for the lessor to grow their farming or ranching operation.

I would also ask you to look carefully at such entities as National Heritage Areas, Nature Preserves, biking and hiking trail systems, and butterfly gardens, among others, as they all contribute to the taking of land by creating a boundary or border that could enforce management plans that would restrict the farming and ranching way of life.

In a press release dated 5/6/2021 it states that the America the Beautiful plan will work collaboratively to conserve and restore the lands and waters, and wildlife that support and sustain the nation. It also states that this is a locally led and voluntary nationwide conservation goal. This plan will work in direct cooperation with the:

USDOI-NPS-NHA. In their own words. National Heritage Areas are not national parks. Rather, NPS partners with, provides technical assistance, and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities. Bourbon County has 4 NHA entities that partner with Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, I would ask, how much money have they received from managing entities of FFNHA?

The following federal departments will also be a part of the America the Beautiful plan to conserve, preserve, and restore.

USDA-NRCS

USFWS-National FWS- KDWPT

USGS

USD Commerce-NOAA
Council on Environmental Quality

In order to accomplish the directives of the 30x30 plan it will enlist the help of the Department of the Interior which oversees the National Park System which oversees or manages the National Heritage Areas. All three entities have conservation, restoration and preservation among their objectives.

Two steps recommended by the report are the creation of an American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas, in other words a map. Isn't it convenient that NHA's have already established federal boundaries?

The 2nd step is to publish America the Beautiful updates yearly.

Such phrases as, work in cooperation with local farmers and ranchers, explore where there is support, incentivize and reward voluntary conservation efforts, community led, among others are used repeatedly. However the inclusion of Bourbon County was neither community led nor voluntary. Judy Billings came on August 27, 2006 and announced Bourbon County is a part of Freedom's Frontier NHA.

So my questions are: Why does a nongovernmental organization have the right to use privately owned land in Bourbon County to expand the power and influence of the National Park Service?

Why does a nongovernmental organization have the right to use privately owned land to leverage federal and matching funds, without the landowner's knowledge, consent, or compensation.

This is a violation of the rights of private property owners in Bourbon County by using our property for a purpose of which we were not informed nor our consent given.

I would contend that private property owners, especially those that make their living off the land have been and always will be the best stewards of their land.

Carefully consider what you are about to agree to by not opposing 30 x 30, America the Beautiful, and any other governmental department that will help fulfill this plan.

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