

*Bob Dole*



**NEWS**

**U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*  
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## **Z-BAR RANCH**

### **DOLE CO-SPONSORS KASSEBAUM PROPOSAL FOR Z-BAR RANCH** **IN CHASE COUNTY; LEGISLATION NOT PERFECT,** **ADDRESSES MANY LOCAL CONCERNS**

For the past several years, a debate has raged in Kansas regarding the preservation of an 11,000 acre ranch known as the Spring Hill Ranch. Unfortunately, this controversy has pitted neighbor against neighbor and divided communities.

My colleague from Kansas, Senator Kassebaum, has worked diligently to resolve this matter. In January of 1992, she stepped in and organized the Spring Hill/Z-Bar Ranch Foundation as a private effort to raise money for the purchase of the ranch. The foundation was crafted to address many of the concerns raised by both sides of this controversy. Unfortunately, the efforts of this private/public Foundation failed when the bank and the Foundation could not reach an agreement on the price and conditions for sale.

Today, I am joining Senator Kassebaum as a co-sponsor of legislation which would authorize the National Park Service to purchase a core area of the ranch. The legislation allows the National Park Service to purchase 180 acres, which includes the buildings and enough acres to build an interpretive center.

I think most of us agree on the need to preserve a piece of the tall grass prairie. Anyone who has driven through the Flint Hills of Kansas appreciates the beauty of this prairie.

#### **Solution is Not Perfect**

In co-sponsoring this legislation, I do have reservations. I have worked closely with both sides in trying to resolve this matter. And while this legislation goes a long way toward addressing some of the concerns on both sides, I want to emphasize that, in my view, this solution is not perfect.

One of the primary stumbling blocks to this agreement has been federal ownership of the land. The reputation of the federal government as a landowner and neighbor is tarnished at best. This bill authorizes the federal government to purchase 180 acres -- no more, no less. The legislation is clear on this point. The government is not allowed to purchase any additional land. I do not envision this as the government camel getting its nose under the tent and then purchasing additional acres at a later date. I would also point out that this legislation authorizes the federal government to purchase the land at no more than fair market value. Let me repeat that. The government may purchase the property at no more than fair market value. Too often we hear horror stories of the government paying exorbitant amounts of money for property. As a matter of fact, I commend the local residents for taking such an active role in opposing the use of federal dollars for this project.

And as we ask the people of Chase County to accept the federal government as a neighbor, I also believe the government should accept the same liability as any other landowner. The federal government should not be a bad neighbor.

#### **Take Local Concerns Into Account**

I would point out that one of the attractive provisions of this bill is that it establishes an advisory committee. The Secretary of the Interior must consult with this committee when preparing the general management plan for the land. This should help ensure that local concerns are taken into account when decisions affecting them are made.

In conclusion, while this legislation is not perfect, it does address many of the concerns of local and state interests. I am hopeful that we can work through this difficult situation and in the end, come up with a compromise that is acceptable to everyone.

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\*Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 5:40 PM.