

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE: INTERIOR DEPT. TO PURSUE WACONDA PROJECT FEASIBILITY

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Department of Interior today said there should be "more latitude in the public's use" of federal land and that "an agreement can be reached" to allow a proposed resort complex at Waconda Lake in Mitchell County, Sen. Bob Dole has announced.

Dole said Interior Sec. Donald Hodel told him in a letter that the Waconda Lake project "could serve as an example of a public-private partnership" on the department's Bureau of Reclamation lands.

"This represents a real attitude change as far as the Interior Department is concerned," said Sen. Dole, "and that was the biggest obstacle that had to be overcome. Now I'm confident we can move on and deal with the smaller issues. It looks as though the resort is not too far away from becoming a reality."

Sec. Hodel's letter to Dole stated, "We have concluded that there should be more latitude in the public's use of bureau lakes and surrounding lands, and have recognized that in many cases opportunities for the public's use of bureau facilities could best be provided by entities other than the federal government.

"I am happy to inform you that, in light of the overwhelming state and local support, the bureau has decided that the proposed resort development at Waconda Lake is a project worth pursuing," said Sec. Hodel, who noted that "although several problems exist with the technicalities of such a large proposal, I believe that an agreement can be reached allowing this type of development while still protecting the dedicated uses for which the project was authorized."

Hodel's letter to Dole was in response to an appeal by Sen. Dole last June urging the Secretary to "overcome bureaucratic obstacles" which stood in the way of the convention and resort facility.