

News from Senator

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## DOLE SUPPORTS WESTERN LANDS DISTRIBUTION AND REGIONAL EQUALIZATION ACT OF 1979

WASHINGTON -- "I am pleased to join in cosponsoring S. 1680. The Western Lands Distribution and Regional Equalization Act of 1979 as introduced in early August by my distinguished colleague from Utah, Mr. Hatch," Senator Dole said today.

"This act will address the inequities in the adjudication rights and privileges to many states by establishing a mechanism by which states west of the 100th meridian may obtain title to certain public lands within their respective boundaries," said Dole.

### NEED FOR STATE JURISDICTION

"The Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976 has held control over many aspects of public domain which has resulted in apprehension by the public toward the federal government. In some cases, it has been noted that federal land managers have mis-interpreted the legislative provisions that have been made resulting in economic and social damage to these areas in the west that are primarily under federal ownership.

"What has resulted, has been questionable management of our national resource lands. To be in the nation's best interest would be for the states to receive jurisdiction over these lands. With our present energy situation it would be unwise for us not to grant to these states the opportunity to use the capabilities they have developed themselves in helping to wage the battle against the energy crisis," Dole said.

"The evidence that the western states can effectively manage their resources can be seen through wildlife and fossil fuel developments of past years and the contributions that have been made in the preservation of their environments and ecosystems," said Dole.

### EFFECTIVE PROVISIONS AND MECHANISM

"As my colleague from Utah noted in his remarks upon introduction of this measure, the idea of public land transfer is not new -- what we have sought is an effective mechanism to enable transfer. This bill provides that," Dole said.

"To avoid adding more layers of growth to the bureaucracy, this bill provides that federal involvement in each transfer process will be conducted by a seven-person inter-agency federal land transfer board. The bill provides a definite schedule of events that spans a maximum of 28 months during which applications that are in compliance with the act are completed. The bill requires the establishment of state land commissions to manage the lands after they are transferred and specific management planning direction be provided to the state land commissions. In addition, the bill would also provide that certain state legislation be passed prior to land transfers which would insure contracts and covenants currently in force will continue uninterrupted under subsequent state jurisdiction," said Dole.

(more)

BACK TO THE STATES

"Quite simply this bill will allow those western lands which for years have held under the strict rule of the federal government, to decide their fate. Through this measure, the western states will be capable of utilizing all of its resources and regulate their own programs and projects. I believe that this concept will be a welcomed effort to this nation to help meet the many crisis, be it energy or the economy, for years to come," Dole said.

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