

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Josh Peters, County Administrator

FROM: Heidi Eisenhour, Commissioner

DATE: July 7, 2025

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION** re: In the matter of supporting Federal Public Lands in Jefferson County

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Jefferson County is home to a significant portion of Federal public lands, comprising over 75% of its total area, which are integral to the county's economy, environment, and quality of life. Additionally, we receive significant Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools funding towards basic county services from these lands. We are scheduled to receive over \$2M in Federal PILT alone this year.

ANALYSIS:

The US Senate has been considering selling off significant numbers of acres of Federal lands including in Jefferson County. In our county Federal lands are highly valued recreation lands in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park. Changing the designation of these lands would severely impact the tourism sector of our economy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

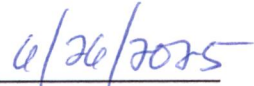
RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt and share a resolution supporting Federal public lands in, and their economic contributions to, Jefferson County.

REVIEWED BY:



Josh Peters, County Administrator



Date

STATE OF WASHINGTON
County of Jefferson

**In the Matter of Supporting Federal Public
Lands in Jefferson County**

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, Jefferson County, Washington, is home to a significant portion of Federal public lands, comprising over 75% of its total area, which are integral to the county's economy, environment, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, these public lands, managed by federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, provide essential resources, including grazing lands for agricultural operations, habitats for wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Jefferson County deeply value these public lands for their recreational, economic, cultural, and spiritual significance, recognizing that these lands are accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or gender; and

WHEREAS, public lands contribute significantly to the local economy through activities such as mineral extraction, timber sales, ranching, tourism, and outdoor recreation, which contributes substantially to Washington's economy; and

WHEREAS, federal management of these public lands ensures that resources are managed for the benefit of all Americans, addressing complex challenges such as wildfire management, watershed protection, and wildlife conservation; and

WHEREAS, the costs associated with managing these lands are a national responsibility, and federal involvement is crucial for the long-term health and sustainability of these resources; and

WHEREAS, there are ongoing attempts to transfer or sell off public lands, which are inconsistent with the values and interests of the residents of Jefferson County the broader Washington community; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) reveals that outdoor recreation in Washington contributed \$22.5 billion to the Washington's GDP, supported over 121,000 jobs, and generated \$9.9 billion in recreation job compensation, demonstrating the profound economic significance of public lands and outdoor recreation to the Washington and to Jefferson County.

According to a [2023 Conservation in the West Poll](#), 84% of Westerners - including 71% of Republicans - are more likely to support presidents who use their power to protect existing public lands. Similarly, [the 2024 poll](#) found that 85 percent support creating new national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges and Tribal protected areas to protect historic sites or areas for outdoor recreation.

Protecting these places is also a winning issue on both sides of the aisle. Since the Antiquities Act was passed, 18 presidents - nine Democratic and nine Republican - have designated or expanded over 160 [national monuments across the country](#).

WHEREAS, Jefferson County recognizes the importance of multiple uses of public lands, including but not limited to, grazing, energy development, and recreation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, STATE OF WASHINGTON:

Section 1. Whereas Clauses Adopted as Findings of Fact. The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the above “Whereas” clauses as Findings of Fact.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this resolution is to:

1. Express its strong support for the continued federal management and stewardship of public lands within Jefferson County.
2. Oppose any efforts to sell, transfer, or dispose of these public lands.
3. Encourage the Washington Congressional Delegation to oppose any legislation that would negatively impact public lands and to support policies that ensure their long-term preservation and sustainable use.
4. We ask you to fully fund our public lands, oppose the sale of public lands in the Budget Reconciliation Package, and oppose any attempts to change the Antiquities Act or reduce the size of our national monuments.
5. Recognize the multiple uses of public lands, and encourage a balanced approach to land management.
6. Urge federal land management agencies to continue to collaborate with local communities, stakeholders, and other governmental entities to ensure effective and responsible management of public lands.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or section of this resolution or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this resolution or its application to other persons or circumstances shall be fully valid and shall not be affected.

Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

Section 5. SEPA Categorical Exemption. This resolution is categorically exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act under WAC [197-11-800\(19\)](#).

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

APPROVED this _____ day of July, 2025.

SEAL:

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heidi Eisenhour, Chair

Greg Brotherton, Member

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Member

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carolyn Gallaway, CMC Date
Clerk of the Board

Philip C. Hunsucker, Date
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney