

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Josh Peters, County Administrator

FROM: Heidi Eisenhour, Commissioner

DATE: July 14, 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 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.

The Commissioners reviewed the draft resolution on July 7, 2025 and made proposed edits, which are incorporated in the updated resolution attached.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

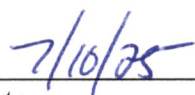
RECOMMENDATION:

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 and the National Park Service provide essential resources, 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 timber sales, 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 and the broader Washington community; and

WHEREAS, despite recent changes to federal lands proposals, the recently passed Federal budget and policy in development has the potential to significantly impact federal lands in Washington through increased resource extraction, reduced environmental protections, and changes in energy policy; 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, recreation, wildlife habitat, timber harvest and energy development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Jefferson County hereby:

1. Expresses its strong support for the continued federal management and stewardship of public lands within Jefferson County and the teams of employees who work in support of our federal lands.
2. Opposes any efforts to sell, transfer, or dispose of these public lands.
3. Encourages 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. Asks you to fully fund stewardship of our public lands and oppose attempts to change the Antiquities Act.
5. Recognizes the multiple uses of public lands, and encourages a balanced approach to land management.
6. Opposes efforts to repeal the "Roadless Rule" which protects about 2 million of acres of undeveloped national forests from logging and other uses in Washington.
7. Urges 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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the members of the Washington Congressional Delegation, the Governor of Washington, and the relevant federal land management agencies.

Passed and adopted this 14th day of July, 2025.

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

ADOPTED and APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 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

Philip C. Hunsucker, Date
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney