



Town of Mammoth Lakes

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June 20, 2025

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin Kiley
United States House of Representatives
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Urgent Opposition to Public Land Sell-Off in Senate Budget Reconciliation Bill

Dear Senator Padilla, Senator Schiff, and Representative Kiley,

On behalf of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, I write to express our strongest opposition to the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee's budget reconciliation bill, which authorizes the sale of up to 300 million acres of public lands across 11 western states. These sales could take place with little to no public input, and the consequences for the Eastern Sierra region would be profound.

The Senate's proposal to sell off public lands across the country includes California's public lands - curiously with a specific exemption for public lands in the state of Montana - with virtually no community engagement. This sell-off could include places such as the Mammoth Lakes Basin, Reds Meadow, Mono Lake, and even the ski and snowboarding slopes of Mammoth and June Mountains. These landscapes are not only icons of natural beauty and biodiversity; they lie at the heart of our recreation-based tourism economy and the heart of our cultural identity. Sales of public lands would devastate Mammoth Lakes and threaten the long-term economic vitality of the entire Eastern Sierra region, which depends on the health and preservation of our unmatched natural assets.

Millions of people visit each year to camp, hike, bike, fish, ski, snowmobile, and explore our world-class backcountry. The Lakes Basin, Reds Meadow, and Mono Lake offer irreplaceable recreational experiences and support jobs across lodging, guiding, gear retail, and hospitality. Our public lands are not a political bargaining chip; they are the foundation of a thriving, sustainable outdoor recreation economy loved and cherished by millions of our fellow US citizens and by visitors from around the world.

Our region's economy relies heavily on sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation. Equally important, the public lands of California's 3rd Congressional District (CD3), including the forests, meadows, and watersheds of the Sierra Nevada, play an essential role in California's water security

and ecological health. These lands protect the headwaters that supply more than 60% of California's developed water and provide critical habitat connectivity, carbon sequestration, and climate resilience benefits for the entire state. As documented in both the Sierra Jobs First Strategic Plan and the Eastern Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), tourism is the top economic driver in the region and accounts for a large portion of the nearly 70,000 jobs held across the seven-county Sierra Jobs First region, irreplaceable economic pillars that cannot be outsourced or relocated and depend entirely on access to pristine public landscapes. The CEDS also highlights that from 2014 to 2023, the Eastern Sierra region generated more than \$2.18 billion in travel-related spending.

The bill proposes a process that is shockingly opaque and rushed: within 30 days of enactment, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture must begin accepting land sale nominations from "any interested party," including speculators and foreign entities. New tracts must be identified every 60 days until between 2.02 and 3.04 million acres are sold, with no guaranteed hearings or public comment periods. Local governments and Tribal Nations are sidelined, and the so-called housing justification lacks enforceable covenants or definitions. This unprecedented liquidation of public lands is being justified not to solve the housing crisis, but to subsidize tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

Adding insult to injury, the bill removes critical protections for grazing lands and recreation infrastructure and authorizes sales in administratively protected areas like wilderness study areas, inventoried roadless areas, and critical wildlife corridors. This risks permanently damaging landscapes that Californians and visitors alike hold sacred.

Representative Kiley, it is imperative that you, who have been elected to represent the people and public lands of California's CD3, continue to oppose this unprecedented land sell-off. You stood up to successfully speak out about the sell-off in the house bill and we need you to stand strong to protect our district and the interests of all Californians who depend on the water and ecosystem services that are provided by the public lands in your district. Senators Padilla and Schiff, we call on you now to do everything in your power to stop this looming catastrophe. **We ask that all of you work together - as we do here in the Eastern Sierra region - to reject the public land sell-off provisions in their entirety from any final reconciliation package.**

As Californians, we must not allow a cynical short-term fiscal maneuver to destroy the long-term economic foundation of our communities. The public lands of California's CD3, including those in the Eastern Sierra, are not only economic assets; they are vital to the health of the entire state. Please stand with your constituents in the Eastern Sierra, our constituents in Mammoth Lakes, and all American citizens throughout the country who love and rely on America's public lands, especially those in California.

Sincerely,



Christine Bubser
Mayor, Town of Mammoth Lakes

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Secretary
State Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil, California State Senate, District 4
Assemblymember David Tangipa, California State Assembly, District 8
Board Chairs of Sierra Counties: Mono, Inyo, Alpine, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Calaveras,
and Amador
California State Association of Counties
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Laura Varela, Regional Public Affairs Manager - League of California Cities Inland
Empire/ Desert Mountain Divisions (via email)
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