

NAR Committee:

Land Use, Property Rights and Environment Committee

What is the fundamental issue?

Public lands, at the most basic level, are lands that are held and administered by the government, whether it be federal, state, or local. They are maintained for the use and enjoyment of the public and offer a multitude of benefits that are vital for the environment, economy, and society. Some of these benefits include:

Recreation and Health - Public lands provide outdoor spaces for hiking, camping and wildlife viewing.

Economic Value - Public lands add value to the economy because they attract industry and businesses that are able to extract value from the land, such as livestock grazing or a guiding service.

Conservation - Public lands play a crucial role in preserving natural landscapes and ecosystems, which are home to diverse species of flora and fauna.

Cultural and Historic Preservation - Public lands protect sites that have historic, cultural or archeological importance.

Scientific Research - Public lands serve as living laboratories where scientists can conduct research on ecosystems, climate change and conservation methods.

Climate Change Mitigation - By preserving forests and other ecosystems, public lands play a role in carbon sequestration and help mitigate the effects of climate change.

Public lands are a shared resource that provide ecological, economic, and social benefits, contributing to the well-being of communities and the nation.

I am a real estate professional. What does this mean for my business?

Public lands could have a positive impact on real estate, because properties adjacent to, or in close proximity to, or with access to, public lands such as a national park have higher property values than properties further away from the public land amenity.

On the other hand, public lands could have a negative impact on real estate because they take land out of local real estate markets and may restrict how adjacent properties can be used. These actions could decrease property values and harm real estate markets.

NAR Policy:

Federal Ownership of Real Property

NAR believes that current government real property acquisition practices have resulted in excessive amounts of private property being placed in the government estate. Federal agencies have been authorized by Congress to acquire private property, but may not be provided with the resources necessary to promptly compensate landowners or adequately manage and maintain acquired properties.

Congress should reform the current federal property acquisition policy which has resulted in large-scale acquisition authorizations without timely appropriation of funds for actual purchase. Any new acquisition of property by the federal government should include timeline limits for appropriation and compensation, a management plan approved prior to purchase for maintaining the property, and transaction transparency measures such as prompt and direct notifications to property owners who may be impacted by the acquisition.

Furthermore, the federal government should conduct a thorough inventory of its real property assets and dispose of those properties which exceed government needs. This should include an examination of and update to existing laws and policies that create unnecessary roadblocks and conflicts to a responsible and simplified property disposal program.

Every federal agency holding real property should participate in this inventory and utilize private sector expertise in appraising, marketing, and liquidation of property. An aggressive, responsible, and simplified real property disposal program, involving the private sector in transacting sales, will reduce federal property management costs, increase private property ownership opportunities, and help reduce our national debt.

This policy was current as of the NAR 2020 Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting.

Opposition Arguments:

More land should be made public because of all the vast economic, energy, environment, cultural and natural resource benefits that accrue to the country.

Legislative/Regulatory Status/Outlook

N/A

Current Legislation/Regulation (bill number or regulation)

N/A

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NAR Issue Summaries

Environment / Transfer of Public Lands

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