

January 19, 2017

Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman
United States House Committee on Rules
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Louise M. Slaughter
Ranking Member
United States House Committee on Rules
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter:

The Public Lands Foundation opposed the language in House Resolution 5 undervaluing public lands during conveyances and the revival of the Holman Rule, which politicizes the federal civil service workforce. We are deeply disappointed that these provisions were included in the resolution and feel that the use of these provisions will be a disservice to the public in evaluating the disposal of their lands and a disservice to hard working federal employees trying to do their job to the best of their abilities.

The Public Lands Foundation is a nonprofit national organization incorporated in 1987 to support keeping public lands in public hands, embracing multiple use management of the public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and following sound environmental principles. We are a membership organization whose members are predominantly retired former employees of the BLM. As such, our membership represents a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience in public land management.

The new House Rules (embedded in Section (q) of H. Res. 5) regarding conveyances undervalue in monetary terms the current or potential revenues from federal lands during a conveyance, or transfer to a state, local or private entity. This new rule is a play in accounting which would deceive the American public about the true value of public lands being considered for conveyance.

The proposed rule changes the well-established and accepted past practices of conveyance, and ignores the provisions in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, (FLPMA) where full market values need to be identified, and disclosed to the public. **For example, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Economic Report for Fiscal Year 2015 report highlights that Interior's activities related to fossil fuel extraction and mining contributed \$179 billion to the national**

economy. Interior investments in recreation, conservation, water and renewable energy also led to \$106 billion in economic output, and supported 862,000 jobs.

This rule fails to consider the full market value of lands, would shortchange the American taxpayer, minimize income to the Federal treasury, and detract from achieving the goal of a more balanced budget. We urge the House to reconsider this provision and to continue to follow the existing law and provisions under FLPMA wherein the process identifies the true costs, and potential benefits, of conveyances, and discloses these to the public in a fair and open process.

Secondly, the revision of the “Holman Rule” would result in unprecedented negative impacts to federal employees in the civil service who strive to serve the American public every day. The Civil Service Acts and Executive orders since the 1870’s, and when updated administratively in 1978, have served the American public well. These regulations have made for a professional and skilled federal work force that is not subject to direct political manipulation. The current laws also facilitate recruitment of new employees, and help to build and maintain the most experienced, skilled and loyal civil work force in the world. Invoking the Holman rule would undermine the objectivity and dedication of all federal employees and ultimately result in failure to implement federal laws and regulations in a fair and cost-effective manner. We urge the House to reconsider this provision and prevent the politicizing of our government workforce.

Sincerely,

/S/ Jesse J. Juen

Jesse J. Juen, President