# RESOLUTION NO. 2021-04

## A RESOLUTION OPPOSING CONSERVATION DESIGNATION OR RESTRICTION OF LANDS IN DUCHESNE COUNTY, UTAH UNDER THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S "30 X 30" INITIATIVE WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF DUCHESNE COUNTY

**WHEREAS,** approximately 64.49% of the total area within the borders of Duchesne County, Utah is owned and/or managed by the Federal government; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 63% of the total area within the borders of the State of Utah is owned and/or managed by the Federal government; and

**WHEREAS,** the State of Utah is exceeded only by the State of Nevada in the percentage of land within its borders that is owned and/or managed by the Federal government; and

**WHEREAS,** over 289,000 acres, or approximately 13.8% of Duchesne County's total land area, is designated Wilderness within the High Uintas Wilderness Area; and

**WHEREAS**, thousands of additional Forest Service acres within Duchesne County are managed as "Roadless Areas" or "Research Natural Areas"; and

**WHEREAS,** thousands of acres of BLM lands in Duchesne County are designated for protection under "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern," "Wilderness Study areas" or "Special Recreation Management Areas;" and

**WHEREAS,** only 28% of the total land mass of over 2 million acres in Duchesne County is private land subject to ad valorem taxation; and

**WHEREAS,** recent studies prepared for the State of Utah have found that the federal Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) program returns a fraction of the revenue to local governments compared to what would be derived from similar private lands; and

**WHEREAS,** Duchesne County and all other public lands counties in Utah have adopted Resource Management Plans describing how federal lands should be managed for multiple use and sustained yield; and

**WHEREAS,** Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, issued by President Biden on January 27, 2021 calls for the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a report for recommending steps to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of lands and waters in the United States by 2030 (the "30 X 30 initiative"); and

**WHEREAS**, production of natural resources on Federal lands, including coal, oil, natural gas, and timber is critical to the American economy and our way of life, while decreasing America's reliance on foreign imports and enhancing our geopolitical security; and

**WHEREAS**, mismanagement of Federal lands, including reductions in timber harvesting, prescribed burning and vegetation treatments has contributed to the degradation of certain Federal lands and increased the risk of catastrophic wildfires, insect infestations, and watershed impairment; and

**WHEREAS**, livestock grazing on Federal lands provides a critical source of fiber and protein to the American people while producing positive externalities on Federal lands, such as vegetation management and wildfire risk reduction; and

**WHEREAS**, Federal lands provides abundant and diverse forms of outdoor recreation, including off-road motorized recreation, to a wide array of the American public, with manifold benefits to mental health and quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, all major decisions on Federal lands are subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act, thus protecting Federal lands from undue degradation; and

**WHEREAS**, the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, as enshrined in the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976, outline a path to protect American's land and water while simultaneously balancing the sustainable use of and extraction of natural resources from Federal lands for the benefit of the American people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 requires the BLM to coordinate with local governments and attempt to achieve consistency with local government plans to the greatest degree possible; and

**WHEREAS**, the extraction of natural resources (oil and gas) from federal lands in Duchesne County is the primary engine of economic activity in Duchesne County, providing high paying jobs, mineral lease royalties, sales and property taxes paid by extraction industry companies and a wide array of associated service companies;

**NOW THEREFORE,** be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners, Duchesne County, Utah, as follows:

1. The Duchesne County Commissioners hereby oppose any additional conservation protections or restrictions placed on Federal lands within Duchesne County in pursuit of the "30 x 30" initiative or Executive Order 14008 without the express written consent of the County Commission.

2. The Duchesne County Commissioners hereby call upon the United States Congress to enact legislation protecting county governments from unilateral imposition of unwanted conservation protections and restrictions on Federal lands by any presidential administration.

3. The Duchesne County Commissioners hereby call upon Utah's Congressional Delegation, the Utah State Legislature, the Utah Attorney General and the Governor of Utah to actively oppose actions by the Biden Administration to impose conservation protections and restrictions on Federal lands in pursuit of the "30 x 30" initiative without the express written consent and cooperation of the county government where the affected Federal lands are located.

**DATED** this 19th day of April 2021.

**DUCHESNE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Greg Todd

Greg Todd, Chairman

Irene Hansen

Irene Hansen, Commissioner

Greg Miles

Greg Miles, Commissioner