

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CHAIRPERSON AND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF MORRILL, NEBRASKA, as follows:

WHEREAS, Morrill County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Nebraska for which the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Morrill County contains approximately 915,200 acres of land situated in Western Nebraska;

WHEREAS, the federal government owns less than 1% of this land within the County, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are responsible for managing over 160 acres of these federal lands;

WHEREAS, approximately 1180 acres (approximately 2 percent) of privately owned land in Morrill County is currently protected with perpetual conservation easements;

WHEREAS, designating lands as wilderness does not assure its preservation. Left in an undisturbed or natural state, these lands are highly susceptible to wildland wildfires, insect infestation and disease, all of which degrades the natural and human environment;

WHEREAS, the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the County, its businesses, and its citizens depend upon the private ownership of land and the use of its resources;

WHEREAS, many of Morrill County's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize and/or depend upon the private ownership of land and its resources, including, but not limited to, livestock grazing, agricultural and horticultural activities, oil and gas exploration and production, mining and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation;

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the Nebraska economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Morrill County and its citizens;

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619);

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve **at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030**, which is called the "30 x 30" program;

WHEREAS, under the 30 x 30 program, approximately 680 million acres of our Nation's lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in its natural state, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources;

WHEREAS, there is no constitutional or statutory authority for the President, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, or any other federal agency to set aside and permanently preserve 30 percent of all land and water in the United States, and no such authority is referenced in Executive Order 14008;

WHEREAS, placing private lands into permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economies of many states, including Nebraska, and in particular rural counties such as Morrill County whose citizens depend the private ownership of land for their livelihoods;

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, will conflict with the plans, policies and programs of Morrill County as expressed in the County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2000;

WHEREAS, conversion of land from private ownership to federal ownership typically results in removal of said land from the tax rolls of the applicable taxing entity, whereby diminishing the pool of total tax revenue available, and causing a potential for the burden of increased taxation for the remaining owners of privately held land;

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at 216(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant federal agencies to "submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Morrill County, Nebraska, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation's land in their natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The Board further opposes the designation of lands in Morrill County as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, and open space, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued private ownership of land in the County, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber.

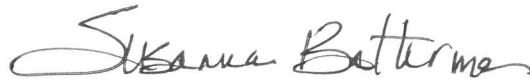
4. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Nebraska's water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Nebraska law.
5. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global greenhouse gas emissions policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities, but opposes the use of global climate change as a justification to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
6. The Board also maintains that any lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment of full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Morrill County, its businesses, and its citizens.
7. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior and all other relevant Federal and State agencies; and

DATED THIS 23rd DAY OF March, 2021.

COUNTY OF MORRILL, NEBRASKA



Jeff Metz, Chairperson
Morrill County Board of Commissioners



Susanna Batterman, Member
Morrill County Board of Commissioners



Joshua Schmidt, Member
Morrill County Board of Commissioners



ATTEST:



Kathy Brandt, County Clerk