

REFERENCE TITLE: federal lands; housing shortage

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-sixth Legislature
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Introduced by
Representative Griffin

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO SELL UNDERUSED FEDERAL LANDS TO
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO BUILD RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the United States Secretary of the Interior and the Congress of the
2 United States of America:

3 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

4 Whereas, the federal government's ownership of large amounts of land
5 in the western United States hinders the ability of communities in these
6 areas to expand; and

7 Whereas, the constrained supply of housing does not meet the current
8 level of housing demand, which has led to an exorbitant increase in home
9 prices over the past two years; and

10 Whereas, the federal government's extensive land ownership in states
11 such as Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming is a significant reason for the
12 ongoing housing shortages in these areas; and

13 Whereas, increased housing prices, in conjunction with historic
14 inflation, has made life less affordable for citizens in the western
15 United States; and

16 Whereas, in the last session of Congress, legislation known as the
17 Helping Open Underutilized Space to Ensure Shelter Act was introduced,
18 which would have amended the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to
19 allow the United States Secretary of the Interior to sell specific tracts
20 of public lands at the request of state and local governments for them to
21 build residential housing; and

22 Whereas, this prudent legislation would have required the Interior
23 Secretary to establish a formal process for applicants to nominate
24 underused federal lands for purchase while exempting from nomination
25 federally protected lands such as national recreation areas, national
26 monuments and congressionally designated wilderness; and

27 Whereas, under this legislation, monies from the sale of federal
28 lands could have been used by the Interior Secretary to make capital
29 improvements in units of the National Park System, to preserve or restore
30 critical habitat and to develop and implement plans for wildfire
31 prevention and hazardous fuels reduction; and

32 Whereas, in Nevada, where federal land ownership is approximately
33 80%, the federal government in recent years sold parcels of public land
34 for residential development, and other states should have the same
35 opportunity to alleviate their housing shortages by purchasing underused
36 federal land tracts; and

37 Whereas, implementing a commonsense and responsible process to free
38 underused federal lands for residential and other development will go a
39 long way in making affordable housing more accessible for all and allowing
40 western communities to grow and thrive.

41 Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of
42 Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

43 1. That the Congress of the United States enact the Helping Open
44 Underutilized Space to Ensure Shelter Act, or similar legislation, to

1 allow the United States Secretary of the Interior to sell federal parcels
2 of land to state and local governments.

3 2. That, on passage of such legislation, the United States
4 Secretary of the Interior immediately implement a process for applicants
5 to nominate federal lands for purchase.

6 3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit
7 copies of this Memorial to the United States Secretary of the Interior,
8 the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United
9 States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State
10 of Arizona.