

House Engrossed  
federal lands; housing shortage

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-sixth Legislature  
First Regular Session  
2023

## **HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2002**

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.