



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**  
IDAHO

Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Valley County Commission  
219 N Main St.  
Cascade, ID 83611

Dear Valley County Commissioners,

We are writing to urge you to vote no on any collaboration with the American Lands Council (ALC) in support of the Utah Supreme Court lawsuit aimed at transferring federal public lands to state control. This initiative, championed by the ALC, poses significant risks to the public lands we cherish in Idaho and the broader West.

Public lands are a cornerstone of our way of life in Idaho. They provide invaluable spaces for recreation, wildlife habitat, clean water, and economic activity. Efforts to transfer these lands to state control, as proposed in Utah's lawsuit, threaten to undermine these benefits. Historically, states have often been unable to manage large expanses of public land effectively due to budget constraints. This all too often leads to the sale of lands to private interests, restricting public access and diminishing the very resources that sustain our communities.

Organizations like the ALC advocate for state control under the guise of "local decision-making," but their proposals often prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term sustainability. Idaho's public lands generate significant economic activity from tourism, outdoor recreation, and ecosystem services. These lands also attract new residents and businesses that value access to pristine natural environments. Any shift toward privatization or industrial exploitation of these lands would jeopardize these benefits and erode our shared heritage.

The lawsuit supported by the ALC is not only legally questionable but also fiscally irresponsible. Legal experts have repeatedly stated that the U.S. Constitution vests authority over public lands with the federal government. Pursuing this legal battle wastes taxpayer dollars on a losing fight while diverting attention and resources from pressing local issues. Furthermore, if states were to take control of federal lands, the financial burden of land management—including wildfire mitigation, conservation efforts, and infrastructure—would fall squarely on state and local governments, burdening taxpayers with unsustainable costs.

Transferring Federally managed public land to State control will make it much easier to sell the land to private interests. We have seen this happen recently in Valley County with Trident LLC's attempt to privatize 40,000 acres of State of Idaho land around Payette and Little Payette lakes. This privatization would directly result in loss of access for Valley County residents, who have a heritage of hunting, fishing and recreating on public lands.



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Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) is a non-profit conservation group with 20,000+ members in chapters across 48 states, two Canadian provinces and one territory. We seek to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and work on behalf of fish, wildlife and wild places. Our Idaho Chapter consists of over 1,000 hunters & anglers who cherish the vast public lands within our great state.

Please take a moment to review some perspectives directly from our members in Valley County:

"As a valley county resident i strongly oppose federal land being handed over to the state to sell to the highest bidder. This is our land it should stay in the hands of the people not the pockets of the elite."

– Justin Douty, Valley County Resident and Idaho BHA Member

"While I fully understand concerns about Federal land managers, transferring Federally public land to State control is the first step in a thinly veiled attempt to privatize these lands and remove public access that Valley Country residents cherish. We have seen this recently in Valley County with the attempt by Trident LLC to privatize 40,000 acres of State of Idaho public land around Payette and Little Payette lake. We have also seen wealthy landowners block roads and access throughout Valley County, reducing access to residents who hunt, fish, hike and recreate on public lands. Transferring our Federally managed public land to State control only makes it much easier to divest the land to wealthy private interests who will inevitably close access to Valley County residents."

– Edward Rebman, Valley County Resident and Idaho BHA Co-Chair

"As a Valley County resident, BHA member, and life-long public land steward I encourage the Valley county commissioners to not collaborate with the American Lands Council in support of Utah's Supreme Court lawsuit aiming to dispose of our shared public lands. This is an egregious attempt to rob Americans of their public lands where they enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, and escaping from the noise of cities. Public lands are where friends and families get together to reconnect with each other and nature. Public land is what makes this nation great and where most of the western US gets their clean water. If our federal lands are turned over to the states, they will eventually be sold off to private entities and only the wealthy will be able to enjoy them."

– Jenny Turner, Valley County Resident and Idaho BHA Member

As elected leaders, you have a responsibility to represent the interests of Valley County residents, who overwhelmingly value access to public lands. Aligning with the ALC and its



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agenda risks alienating constituents who understand the importance of maintaining public lands for future generations. We encourage you to stand with the majority of Idahoans who value these lands as they are—public, accessible, and sustainably managed.

Please consider the long-term implications of supporting the ALC's agenda. Instead of engaging with an organization that seeks to undermine public lands, we urge you to focus on collaborative efforts that enhance local economies, conserve natural resources, and maintain the wide-open spaces that make Idaho unique.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Dre Arman  
Idaho Chapter Coordinator  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Idaho Chapter



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