



RESOLUTION 2017-10

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF THE ADVANCING CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION ACT

Whereas, the Western States Land Commissioners Association ("WSLCA") and its member states manage over 515 million acres of trust lands, minerals, and waterways that are interspersed with federal lands; and

Whereas, members of WSLCA have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands for public education, economic development, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, the ability of member states to fulfill their constitutional mandates is severely hindered when trust lands are surrounded by federal conservation areas; and

Whereas, land exchanges between states and the federal government are very expensive and time consuming; and

Whereas, the need for additional legislative means for resolving problems created by the location of state trust lands inholdings that are trapped inside federal conservation areas remains pressing for WSLCA member states; and

Whereas, WSLCA and its member states have worked for several years to develop the proposed federal legislation through consultation and discussions with conservation groups, Congress, the Department of Interior and other governmental entities, and the public; and

Whereas, prior draft proposals for such proposed legislation have been refined to consider concerns and comments expressed by such groups; and

Whereas, Congress has conducted legislative hearings on the Advancing Conservation and Education Act of 2016 (ACE) and received supportive testimony from the Department of Interior, State Land Commissioners, and conservation advocates demonstrating broad bi-partisan support; and

WSLCA Resolution 2017-10
Page 2 – July 12, 2017

Whereas, the ACE Act would create a streamlined and economical mechanism for the relinquishment to the United States of title to state trust lands located within federal conservation areas and the subsequent selection of unappropriated federal public lands as a means of eliminating conflicts between state and federal land management within federal conservation areas; and

Whereas, the ACE Act would insure that conservation mandates of federal land management agencies do not conflict with the constitutional mandate of State trust land managers to fund K-12 public education and other worthy beneficiaries in each state; and

Whereas, the ACE Act would permit a streamlined process for the completion of federal conservation areas and would uphold the constitutional promise of land grants.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the WSLCA does hereby support and endorse the passage of The Advancing Conservation and Education Act, as presented to the membership of WSLCA, and requests that the members of the congressional delegations of each WSLCA state take all necessary actions to ensure the timely enactment of the proposed legislation into federal law.

Adopted this 12th day of July, 2017.



Harry Birdwell, President
WSLCA



Linda Fisher, Secretary
WSLCA