

**RESOLUTION URGING VEGETATION
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON BLM GROUND**

2002 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Sponsor: Leonard M. Blackham

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor urges the Federal Bureau of Land Management to allow broad-based vegetation management practices on Bureau of Land Management lands.

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, although the Bureau of Land Management has historically carried out a rangeland restoration program in Utah, the effort has not kept pace with dynamic changes that are occurring on public lands and among certain ecosystems;

WHEREAS, many of the more productive shrublands have been replaced by cheatgrass in areas of high fire frequency or dense stands of pinyon-juniper woodland where fire has been excluded;

WHEREAS, big game, sage grouse, and a variety of migratory bird populations are dependent on healthy sagebrush ranges for their survival;

WHEREAS, noxious weeds and invasive annual grasses are pervasive on many of these sagebrush ranges, setting the stage for an unalterable increase in the frequency of fire and the subsequent loss of productive rangelands for livestock and wildlife;

WHEREAS, fish and wildlife populations in Utah are significantly affected by water availability;

WHEREAS, watersheds dominated by closed-canopied, pinyon-juniper woodlands lack sufficient herbaceous plant cover to trap, store, and slowly release water to springs, streams, lakes, and reservoirs;

WHEREAS, vast areas within these ecosystems have become "ecological dead ends," where plant communities no longer function to provide healthy watersheds, diverse wildlife habitats, or productive grazing lands;

WHEREAS, natural recovery is no longer possible due to loss of seed reserves in the soil,

and the introduction of noxious weeds and exotic annual grasses;

WHEREAS, mule deer populations for several herd units in the state are currently below the management objectives established by the state Wildlife Board;

WHEREAS, herd size is affected by the carrying capacity of the winter range;

WHEREAS, a significant amount of the winter ranges in the state are located on Bureau of Land Management land, and management of these lands is key to sustaining healthy big game populations;

WHEREAS, a well-planned, long-term restoration program is necessary to prevent the large-scale conversion of diverse, productive shrublands to either annual grasslands or dense stands of pinyon-juniper woodlands, depending on the fire regimen;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management needs to be able to select from the full range of treatment prescriptions, such as mechanical, chemical, fire, and biological treatments, that have proven successful in carrying out restoration projects in Utah;

WHEREAS, all adapted species, both native and nonnative, should be considered for use in range restoration projects so that land managers may make adjustments in response to restoration objectives, seed availability, budget constraints, and the need to select species that can compete effectively with invasive weed species;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management should increase its capability for carrying out prescribed burns to meet current and future targets for range restoration work on its lands;

WHEREAS, proper planting techniques should be followed when artificial seeding is required to meet restoration objectives; and

WHEREAS, vegetation management on Bureau of Land Management land within Utah would be of great benefit to the state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, urges the Federal Bureau of Land Management to use broad-based vegetation management practices on Bureau of Land Management lands within Utah.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Federal Bureau of Land Management, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, and the members of Utah's

congressional delegation.