

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING**
2 **CURRENT BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**
3 **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

4 2009 GENERAL SESSION

5 STATE OF UTAH

6 **Chief Sponsor: John G. Mathis**

7 Senate Sponsor: Kevin T. Van Tassell

8
9 **LONG TITLE**

10 **General Description:**

11 This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor expresses support for
12 the current Bureau of Land Management resource management plans and the process
13 used to complete the plans.

14 **Highlighted Provisions:**

15 This resolution:

16 ▶ expresses strong support for the federal Bureau of Land Management's resource
17 management plans developed for Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal, Monticello, and
18 Kanab, Utah, and the lengthy, thoughtful, and public process used to develop the
19 plans; and

20 ▶ opposes current actions taken that contest and delay the resource management
21 plans and the sale of 77 oil and gas leases on land in Utah.

22 **Special Clauses:**

23 None

24
25 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

26 WHEREAS, because the nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy leaves the
27 economy vulnerable, serious effort must be devoted to decrease the nation's dependency on
28 foreign energy sources;

29 WHEREAS, oil and natural gas form an essential bridge to attaining a future of energy

30 independence sustained by alternative and renewable energy sources;

31 WHEREAS, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Act) mandates that the
32 federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manage public lands for multiple uses such as
33 outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, energy exploration and production, conservation, and
34 timber production;

35 WHEREAS, the Act establishes that the BLM sustain the health, diversity, and
36 productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations;

37 WHEREAS, in making decisions about land use, the Act requires the BLM to develop
38 resource management plans and update them periodically;

39 WHEREAS, these important land use management decision documents require public
40 input and participation;

41 WHEREAS, managing the nation's cherished public lands for multiple uses is a
42 constant challenge;

43 WHEREAS, citizens expect the BLM to provide responsible energy and minerals
44 development, recreational opportunities, appropriate access, and healthy landscapes, while still
45 providing an adequate level of resource protection to ensure that future generations will
46 continue to benefit from and enjoy these areas;

47 WHEREAS, the resource management plan process, developed by the BLM to
48 accomplish these goals, is thorough, deliberative, and very public;

49 WHEREAS, resource management plans provide administrative protections to some
50 lands, including major constraints such as no surface occupancy and disturbance timing
51 stipulations;

52 WHEREAS, extensive state and community input is invited and submitted both in
53 writing and through the public hearing process;

54 WHEREAS, resource management plans for the Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal,
55 Monticello, and Kanab Field Offices recently went into effect after approximately eight years
56 of development and review;

57 WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of public comments were considered during the

58 planning process;

59 WHEREAS, new environmental restrictions included in the resource management
60 plans provide multiple layers of safeguards to prevent environmental damage to sensitive
61 natural resources;

62 WHEREAS, the proposed plans envision maintaining areas open to oil and gas leasing,
63 but also institute protective measures during development like timing limitations, best
64 management practices, and advanced technology to minimize the footprint of developing those
65 important resources;

66 WHEREAS, there was no cutting of corners or abridgment of processes in preparing
67 the resource management plans;

68 WHEREAS, due to the strong feelings regarding the use of public lands, every private
69 group and government entity involved in the process would like to see some changes in the
70 outcome, but all groups were heard and their concerns given thoughtful and careful
71 consideration;

72 WHEREAS, the state of Utah and Uintah, Duchesne, Grand, Emery, San Juan, Sevier,
73 Garfield, Kane, Wayne, Piute, and Carbon Counties were cooperating agencies in the BLM's
74 development of the current resource management plans and have interests in preserving the
75 plans;

76 WHEREAS, upon approval of these management plans, the BLM offered for lease
77 parcels of land which had been set aside for several years pending completion of the resource
78 management plans;

79 WHEREAS, leases do not convey an unlimited right to explore or an unlimited right to
80 develop oil and gas resources, but are subject to terms designed to minimize and mitigate the
81 impacts of development;

82 WHEREAS, in addition to proposing an accommodation for the nation's pressing need
83 for energy development, the plans also propose protecting public lands within the six planning
84 areas where there are sensitive natural resources, making these lands off limits to surface
85 disturbing activities and unavailable to oil and gas leasing;

86 WHEREAS, this type of protection would extend to almost one million acres of public
87 land in addition to nearly two million acres of existing wilderness study areas;

88 WHEREAS, a lawsuit has been filed challenging the legality of the BLM's December
89 19, 2008, sale of oil and gas leases;

90 WHEREAS, the state has been granted permission by the Court to defend its interests
91 in the lawsuit by participating as an intervenor;

92 WHEREAS, on February 4, 2008, the United States Department of the Interior rejected
93 the bids offered on 77 of the oil and gas leases presented at the December lease sale; and

94 WHEREAS, the lawsuit and the oil and gas lease rejections strike at the heart of a
95 careful, deliberative, lengthy public process to develop resource management plans that would
96 benefit Utahns and the citizens of the United States:

97 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
98 Governor concurring therein, express strong support for the federal Bureau of Land
99 Management's resource management plans developed for the Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal,
100 Monticello, and Kanab, Utah Field Offices, and most particularly for the lengthy, thoughtful,
101 and public process used to develop the plans.

102 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor oppose current
103 actions taken that may contest and delay implementation of the resource management plans.

104 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor request that the
105 Department of the Interior expedite a review of the 77 bid-rejected parcels to determine which
106 may be offered for leasing in the near future.

107 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the United
108 States Department of the Interior, the federal Bureau of Land Management and its Utah office,
109 the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, the Uintah, Duchesne, Grand, Emery, San Juan,
110 Sevier, Garfield, Kane, Wayne, Piute, and Carbon County Commissions, the Moab, Richfield,
111 Price, Vernal, Monticello, and Kanab City Councils, the Utah Public Lands Policy
112 Coordination Office, and to the members of Utah's congressional delegation.