

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION**
2 **ON RANGELANDS**

3 2015 GENERAL SESSION

4 STATE OF UTAH

5 **Chief Sponsor: Michael E. Noel**

6 Senate Sponsor: David P. Hinkins

8 **LONG TITLE**

9 **General Description:**

10 This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor calls on the President of
11 the United States to direct federal agencies that implement management practices that
12 increase soil carbon sequestration to develop comprehensive plans that achieve the
13 maximum amount of carbon sequestration possible and increase the economic and
14 environmental productivity of rangelands and urges similar action within each state.

15 **Highlighted Provisions:**

16 This concurrent resolution:

17 ▶ declares that emphasizing improved soil health as the primary means of removing
18 atmospheric carbon dioxide represents a win/win solution to the current climate
19 change controversy;

20 ▶ calls on the President of the United States to direct those federal agencies currently
21 permitted by law to implement management practices that increase soil carbon
22 sequestration to develop, in a timely fashion, comprehensive plans to achieve the
23 maximum amount of carbon sequestration possible in ways that will increase the
24 economic and environmental productivity of rangelands;

25 ▶ finds that these actions, if taken by the President of the United States, fit firmly
26 within the purposes of the President's Executive Order 13653 and other statements
27 made by the President;



28 ▶ calls upon the leader of each legislative house in each of the other states to
29 implement improved soil health as the primary means of removing atmospheric
30 carbon dioxide to the maximum extent possible; and

31 ▶ urges Utah state agencies with authority to manage lands to increase soil carbon
32 sequestration, or that may encourage greater soil carbon sequestration on private
33 lands, to also develop plans to accomplish these goals for the benefit of the
34 environment and citizens of the state of Utah.

35 **Special Clauses:**

36 None



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

39 WHEREAS, the national debate over whether and to what extent human activity is
40 contributing to climate change is increasingly heated and divisive;

41 WHEREAS, the federal government has identified carbon dioxide as a pollutant and as
42 the major contributor to climate change;

43 WHEREAS, many of the proposals and technologies being considered by the federal
44 government to reduce carbon dioxide emissions would, if implemented, cause major
45 dislocation and great economic harm to the state of Utah and the nation;

46 WHEREAS, because of these negative impacts, many citizens strenuously oppose
47 implementing the current carbon dioxide reduction proposals;

48 WHEREAS, forests, rangelands, and agricultural soils have long been recognized as
49 major carbon sinks for removing and storing atmospheric carbon;

50 WHEREAS, these terrestrial carbon sinks have become less effective in storing
51 atmospheric carbon in recent decades;

52 WHEREAS, due to sub-optimal management practices on vast acreages, terrestrial
53 carbon sinks are actually releasing previously stored carbon into the atmosphere as carbon
54 dioxide and therefore contributing to atmospheric carbon dioxide loading;

55 WHEREAS, in recent years, scientific research has resulted in much better
56 understanding of the dynamics of healthy soil communities that are the active mechanism to
57 sequester atmospheric carbon;

58 WHEREAS, in recent decades the development and application of advanced forestry,

59 rangeland management, and agricultural practices have been demonstrated conclusively at the
60 experimental, farm, and landscape scale to improve the health of these soil communities,
61 thereby generating a wide range of economic and environmental benefits;

62 WHEREAS, these benefits include increased productivity and profitability of lands,
63 restored native bio-diversity, improved watershed health and quality, improved quality and
64 quantity of water, better wildlife habitat, increased resistance to drought, and in the long term,
65 the sequestration of vast amounts of atmospheric carbon in the soil;

66 WHEREAS, while these advanced practices have been widely demonstrated in various
67 locations, including Deseret Ranch in Utah, they have not been incorporated into federal land
68 management practices to any significant degree;

69 WHEREAS, current unwise and unscientific rangeland management practices
70 mandated by the federal government are not only the major cause of the continued widespread
71 deterioration of public rangeland, and all the associated economic and environmental harm, but
72 also are contributing to atmospheric carbon dioxide loading through the loss of carbon dioxide
73 sequestered in these soils;

74 WHEREAS, far superior grazing policies, including those widely demonstrated at
75 Deseret Ranch and other locations, could easily be adopted by federal management agencies
76 and would not only reverse this current decline but would also heal ecosystems;

77 WHEREAS, these more effective grazing policies would produce a wide range of
78 economic and environmental benefits;

79 WHEREAS, proven advanced forestry practices would, if adopted by federal land
80 management agencies, substantially improve the health and productivity of forest lands, greatly
81 reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, restore native biodiversity, and generate a wide range of
82 other economic and environmental benefits while vastly increasing the amount of atmospheric
83 carbon being sequestered;

84 WHEREAS, productive partnerships between federal, state, and local government
85 agencies and private entities have shown great promise as they have implemented these best
86 management practices on a landscape scale;

87 WHEREAS, terrestrial carbon sinks offer immense potential for removing vast amounts
88 of atmospheric carbon;

89 WHEREAS, scientists calculate that if best management practices were applied to

90 forests, rangelands, and agricultural lands, the lands have the potential to sequester all of the
91 atmospheric carbon produced by human activities from the beginning of the Industrial
92 Revolution to the present day;

93 WHEREAS, unlike the disruptive, unaffordable, and economically unsustainable
94 approaches now being pursued, applying these techniques to sequester carbon long-term will
95 result in net benefit to the public and private interests;

96 WHEREAS, this approach to carbon sequestration is clearly a win/win solution to the
97 climate change debate;

98 WHEREAS, this approach effectively meets the concerns of those who believe that
99 atmospheric carbon dioxide levels must be reduced while alleviating the concerns of those who
100 oppose current approaches due to the harm to consumers, the state of Utah, and the nation
101 because this approach generates major economic and environmental benefits at little or no net
102 cost;

103 WHEREAS, Presidential Executive Order 13653 was signed in November 2013 and
104 directs federal agencies to prepare to deal with the effects of climate change; and

105 WHEREAS, this executive order has set as a goal for all federal agencies with any
106 responsibility for natural resource management to "increase...carbon sequestration":

107 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
108 Governor concurring therein, declares that emphasizing improved soil health as the primary
109 means of removing atmospheric carbon dioxide represents a win/win solution to the current
110 climate change controversy.

111 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor call on the
112 President of the United States to direct those federal agencies currently permitted by law to
113 implement management practices that increase soil carbon sequestration to develop, in a timely
114 fashion, comprehensive plans to achieve the maximum amount of carbon sequestration
115 possible in ways that will increase the economic and environmental productivity of rangelands.

116 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor find that these
117 actions, if taken by the President of the United States, fit firmly within the purposes of the
118 President's Executive Order 13653 and other statements made by the President.

119 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor call upon the
120 leader of each legislative house in each of the other states to implement improved soil health as

121 the primary means of removing atmospheric carbon dioxide to the maximum extent possible.

122 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge all state
123 agencies with authority to manage lands to increase soil carbon sequestration, or that may
124 encourage greater soil carbon sequestration on private lands, to also develop plans to
125 accomplish these goals for the benefit of the environment and citizens of the state of Utah.

126 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of
127 the United States, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United
128 States House of Representatives, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the United States
129 Secretary of Agriculture, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the United
130 States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the United States Secretary of
131 Commerce, the United States Secretary of Energy, the United States Secretary of
132 Transportation, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the leader of each
133 legislative house in each of the other states, and the members of Utah's congressional
134 delegation.

Legislative Review Note
as of 2-5-15 8:06 AM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel