

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-03-13A

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S "30 X 30" LAND PRESERVATION GOAL

WHEREAS, Custer County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Oklahoma for which the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") is authorized to act: and

WHEREAS, the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of Custer County, its businesses, and its citizens depend on private land ownership and the use of these resources; and

WHEREAS, many of Custer County's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize private lands and their resources, including livestock grazing, crop production, water ownership and usage, oil and gas exploration and production, recreational industries, hunting/fishing and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the Oklahoma economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Custer County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008, entitled "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad" (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619); and

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce, Chairman of the Council of Environmental Quality, and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least thirty (30) percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the "30 x 30" program; and

WHEREAS, under the 30 x 30 program, an estimated 700 million acres of our Nation's lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in its natural state by 2030, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources; and

WHEREAS, there is no constitutional or statutory authority for the President, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, or any other federal agency to set aside and permanently preserve 30 percent of all land and water in the United States, and no such authority is referenced in Executive Order 14008, which makes it null and void; and

WHEREAS, the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of the land and water in the United States is a public purpose, not voted on or consented to by the people, Congress, or the Oklahoma Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program seeks to replace the decision-making of independent Landowners who have been caring for their private property for generations without federal mandates and restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the Biden Administration has stated they will be using all the tools in existing law to reach their 30 percent target by 2030, including conservation easements in perpetuity, the use of WOTUS, federal conservation programs, National Heritage Areas, Wildlife Corridors, Endangered Species listings and critical habitat designations, and all other similar programs; and

WHEREAS, placing private lands into permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economy of Oklahoma, and counties, such as Custer whose citizens depend on private lands for their security and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, lands placed under permanent conservation easements reduce the value of that parcel of land while increasing the tax burden on other private landowners and industries to make up the property valuation difference; and

WHEREAS, federal conservation programs artificially drive up the cost of, and directly compete with, the working landowners who depend on the ability to lease or purchase those lands for the production of the food, fiber, energy and minerals our nations requires; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Custer County, Oklahoma as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving at least 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters in its natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of lands within our jurisdiction.
2. The Board further opposes the designation and use of lands in Custer County to be included as a part of the "30 x 30" program, whether these be through easements, national heritage areas, wildlife preserves, wildlife corridors, open space, or other federal designations preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued private ownership of land in the County, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber.
4. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Oklahoma laws governing water rights and water use and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Oklahoma Law.
5. The Board opposes and disagrees with using any public purpose, including global climate change, to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
6. The Board also maintains that any lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing sellers/landowners and for the payment of full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not

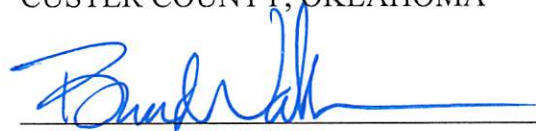
through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Custer County, its businesses, and its citizens.

7. The Board requires that any transfer of conservation easements from land trusts to the federal government within their jurisdiction must have the consent of the Board of Commissioners.
8. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma Attorney General, Governor Stitt and all other relevant Federal and State agencies.

Adopted this 13th day of March, 2023, by the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS of CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

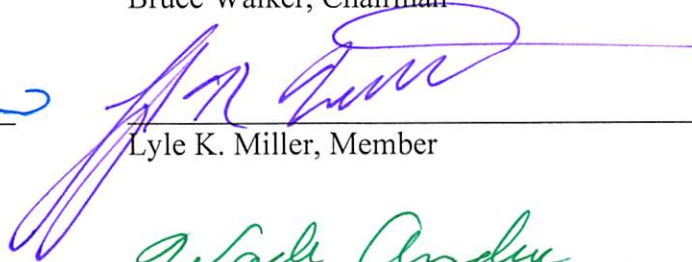
ATTEST:



Bruce Walker, Chairman



Melissa Graham, County Clerk



Lyle K. Miller, Member

(SEAL)



Wade Anders, Member