Letter to the Editor – Public Lands

{Insert 1–2 sentences here about your personal connection to National Forests and public lands—whether through work, family, recreation, or tradition.}

I’m writing with deep concern about growing efforts to sell off or privatize our federal public lands. These lands aren’t just beautiful backdrops—they are the economic, environmental, and cultural foundation of our way of life.

Public lands provide jobs and sustain economies. National Forests alone support over 223,000 jobs and generate $14.5 billion annually for rural America through recreation, restoration, timber, grazing, and other resource management. Recreation on these lands brings over 150 million visitors a year, driving $13 billion in spending that supports our cafes, outfitters, gas stations, and motels.

Beyond the economy, these lands hold our stories. They’re where generations have hunted, fished, and gathered with family. They are where tribes exercise treaty rights and continue cultural practices. They’re where our firefighters train, our kids camp, and where we all breathe cleaner air and drink cleaner water.

Selling these lands would devastate rural communities such as ours—cutting off access, fragmenting wildlife habitat, and pulling the rug out from under local businesses. State or private ownership cannot replace the federal commitment to managing these lands for multiple uses and public benefit.

Let’s be clear: once public lands are sold, we don’t get them back. We must stand up now to keep public lands in public hands—for freedom, for jobs, for tradition, and for the future of rural America.