



Western States Land Commissioners Association

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Western States Land Commissioners Association Applauds Introduction of ACE Act

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Washington DC--The Western States Land Commissioners Association (WSLCA) applauds the introduction of the Advancing Conservation and Education Act of 2014 (ACE) by Congressman Rob Bishop R-UT and Congressman Peter DeFazio D-OR in the U.S. House of Representatives. The act — crafted by WSLCA and its members — will enhance funding of public education and improve management of Federal conservation lands by streamlining the removal of state institutional and school trust lands from within Federal conservation areas. "The ACE Act will allow states to manage trust lands as intended by Congress — to generate funding for our schoolchildren across the nation," stated WSLCA President, Kathy Opp.

WSLCA has been working with its 23 member states, the Western Governors' Association, the Wilderness Society, Congress, and others to craft the ACE Act. It will allow states to remove school trust lands and minerals that are trapped inside congressionally and administratively designated conservation areas such as national parks, wilderness areas, and national monuments. The broadly supported ACE Act will allow states to efficiently exchange these trapped assets for federal lands where generation of income for public education is appropriate. Upon statehood, lands were granted to states in trust for the specific purpose of generating income for public education and other state institutions. When federal conservation lands surround state lands, the ability to manage the land for income and provide funding for education suffers. This new authority will also enhance some of our nation's most prized conservation lands by ensuring our national parks, wilderness, and other conservation areas do not contain state holdings within their borders, thus fulfilling the purpose of the conservation lands.

Established in 1949, WSLCA is comprised of 23 Western and some not so Western states that share the common mandate of managing trust lands on behalf of schoolchildren and other designated beneficiaries in our states on a bi-partisan basis. WSLCA's member states manage more than 447 million acres of lands, submerged lands, and minerals with combined trusts amounting to over \$271 billion, which generated more than \$3.8 billion for public schools in 2012.