

BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA

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September 22, 2016

The Honorable Tom McClintock
United States House of Representatives
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McClintock:

The Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe respectfully requests that you vote “no” during the House Committee on Natural Resources markup of H.R. 5780, the Utah Public Lands Initiative.

We are informed that the bill proposes to take more than 100,000 acres of the Ute Indian Tribe’s Reservation lands for the State of Utah to develop oil and gas resources.

If this bill proceeds, this unilateral taking of Indian land will almost certainly result in costly legal actions at taxpayer expense, and it is reasonable to carefully consider that provisions of this bill will likely not stand under judicial review.

Although the bill is promoted as “a local solution to difficult federal land management issues in eastern Utah,” in fact, much of the bill’s “solution” rests on the unilateral appropriation of the Ute Indian Tribe’s Reservation. In addition, the bill would create utility corridors, create designations which limit the Ute Indian Tribe’s water rights, include local governments in the management of lands and resources currently under federal and tribal jurisdiction, and transfer federal rights-of-way to the State of Utah – again, all these activities are proposed *within* the current Ute Indian Tribe Reservation (the geographic footprint of which has been evidently thoroughly reviewed and settled by the Courts).

We concur with the Ute Indian Tribe’s opposition to H.R. 5780. In addition to the specific concerns of the Ute Tribe, the bill would certainly set a damaging precedent for all tribes, and would roll back federal Indian policy to the late 1800s. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) – a coalition of hundreds of tribal governments – was appalled by this proposal and approved a resolution in opposition solely based on a draft of the bill.

Lastly, we reiterate the NCAI statement that, ‘the era of taking ancestral Indian homelands for the benefit of non-Indians is over - and further efforts to take tribal lands should be opposed by all.’

Please act to uphold the partnership Congress has so carefully built with Native American governments by voting “no” on H.R 5780, and send a clear message that the manifest destiny methods proposed are *unequivocally obsolete*.

Sincerely,

/s/

Claudia Brundin
Chairperson