

# Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) Reauthorization

## A Western Land Program that Achieves Economic and Conservation Goals

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We need your help. While FLTFA expired in July 2011, Congress has an opportunity to reauthorize this important program that achieves economic and conservation goals for the West through federal land sales and land conservation. By co-sponsoring reauthorization legislation in the Senate (S. 714) and House (H.R. 3365), Members of Congress can restore this important “land for land” funding tool to benefit western businesses, landowners, communities and recreational interests. The CBO report for S. 714 states that a 10-year FLTFA reauthorization will decrease the deficit by \$5 million. CBO estimates that BLM will sell nine times more land with FLTFA than without FLTFA (\$90 million versus \$10 million).

**SUMMARY.** In 2000, Congress passed bipartisan legislation (Domenici/Bingaman) that authorized FLTFA for 10 years, and in 2010 Congress extended FLTFA through July 2011. Through FLTFA’s “land for land” program, BLM sells land identified for disposal to ranchers, farmers, businesses and others to consolidate land ownership, create jobs, support economic development and increase revenues to counties by putting land on the tax rolls. These sales generate funding for BLM, USFS, NPS and USFWS to acquire critical inholdings from willing sellers in certain designated areas. BLM has sold land to benefit both the private sector and municipalities, including ranchers, timber interests, real estate companies, a community college, landfills, and a cemetery. The sales provide revenue for federal agencies to acquire high-priority lands with important recreational access for hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, other activities, as well as properties with historic, scenic and cultural resources.

Before FLTFA’s authority expired, BLM completed hundreds of federal land sales, generating over \$115 million and funding over 39 projects. Completed FLTFA projects include river frontage for fly-fishing access at North Platte River SRMA, big-game winter habitat at Elk Springs ACEC in New Mexico, historic preservation at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado, and many other sites. These new places help the local tourism economy through retail sales, hotels, restaurants, gas stations and more. By providing landowners with additional opportunities to sell their lands, FLTFA helps landowners achieve their economic goals. FLTFA does not require taxpayer funds, because it is financed through BLM land sales. Without FLTFA, revenue from sales of BLM lands goes to the U.S. Treasury and not to conservation. Without the administrative money that the FLTFA program generates, BLM has very limited funding to conduct sales, appraisals, acquisitions and other real estate procedures.

**HOUSE BILL – H.R. 3365.** On November 4, 2011, Representatives Lummis (R-WY) and Heinrich (D-NM) introduced a bipartisan bill to reauthorize FLTFA for seven years. Original cosponsors include Representatives Bishop (R-UT), Simpson (R-ID), Pearce (R-NM), Gosar (R-AZ), and Lujan (D-NM). Other co-sponsors include Representatives McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA), Reichert (R-WA), Chaffetz (R-UT), Walden (R-OR), Amodei (R-NV), Pastor (D-AZ), DeFazio (D-OR) and Blumenauer (D-OR).

**SENATE BILL – S. 714.** Senator Bingaman (D-NM) introduced S.714, to extend FLTFA ten years until July 2021. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill. S. 714 strikes the date of enactment restriction on designated areas, which will allow FLTFA funds to go toward any designated area, regardless of when the area was established. With regard to land sales, S. 714 updates the provision to include sales of federal land in land use plans in effect as of the date of enactment of the FLTFA reauthorization bill. As reported, S.714 preserves the Southern Nevada legislation, along with county legislation for Lincoln and White Pine Counties, Nevada, Owyhee County, Idaho, Washington County, Utah, and Douglas County, Washington. Current co-sponsors include Senators Wyden (D-OR), Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), Mark Udall (D-CO) and Bennet (D-CO).