



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.
3241 N. Romero Road
Tucson, AZ 85705



Resolution 2021-04-22 OPPOSING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S "30 X 30" LAND PRESERVATION GOAL

STATE OF ARIZONA

PIMA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors for the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District, State of Arizona, held by public teleconference on April 22, 2021, there were present:

Participants:

Jim Chilton, Chair

Cindy Coping, Vice-Chair

Jonathan DuHamel, Supervisor

Patricia King, Treasurer

Andrew McGibbon, Supervisor

Chris Postel, Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-04-22

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

WHEREAS, The Pima Natural Resource Conservation District (District) is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Arizona for which the Board of Supervisors ("Board") is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS the “cooperators” of the District are individuals who own or manage lands within the District and who have signed cooperative agreements with the District to conserve soil, water, and other natural resources; and

WHEREAS, The Pima Natural Resource Conservation District contains about 2.14 million acres of land situated in eastern Pima County and southeastern Arizona, as illustrated in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, the federal government owns 28% of the land within the District, and the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Army Corp of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are responsible for managing over 584,272 acres of these federal lands as illustrated in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, Prominent protected federal lands situated within the District account for 17% of all lands within the District, including Saguaro National Park (92,000 acres), Ironwood Forest National Monument (93,078 acres), Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (117,464 acres), Baboquivari Peak National Wilderness Area (2,040 acres), Coyote Mountains National Wilderness Area (5,080 acres), and Pusch Ridge National Wilderness Area (56,430 acres); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated 170,880 acres of private, State Trust and federal lands within the District as critical habitat for the jaguar, as illustrated in **Exhibit B**, attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has required businesses in the mining industry to purchase, withdraw from productive use and permanently protect thousands of acres of private land within the District under Section 7 consultations; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona School Trust Fund owns 785,962 acres (36.8% of lands within the District) with a constitutional mandate to manage them to maximize their financial benefit to Arizona’s public K-12 schools, the School for the Deaf and Blind, hospitals and other Trust beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona has protected 1,567 acres within the District as a State Wildlife Area; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Defense owns 11,036 acres (0.5% of lands within the District) for the purposes of national defense; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona has protected 5,500 acres within the District and adjacent Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District as Catalina State Park; and

WHEREAS, under its Maeveen Behan Conservation Lands System, since 2001, Pima County has purchased over 180,000 acres representing 8.4% of lands in the District (73,000 acres of fee-owned lands, and 114,000 acres of leased ranch lands); and in addition has protected more than 190 miles of rivers and washes; and has protected every undeveloped ridge-top from development under County zoning ordinances; and owns and manages at least 20,000 additional acres protected in their natural state as County

parks. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued Pima County a County-wide Endangered Species Act Section 10 multi-species conservation permit as illustrated in *Exhibit C*, attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, Tucson Water owns and has preserved in perpetuity in a natural state more than 22,000 acres of formerly productive agricultural lands within the District; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Marana has committed to protecting the 2,400 acre Tortolita Mountain Preserve; and

WHEREAS, the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District has entered into Coordinated Resource Management Plans approved by private landowners, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Game and Fish Department, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Arizona State Lands Department to apply scientifically proven rangeland conservation management plans covering approximately 370,000 acres of land within the District; and

WHEREAS, the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance was founded by District cooperators and has worked since 1995, in cooperation with conservation-minded NGOs, the District, the State of Arizona and various agencies of the federal government to protect and restore desired historical ecological conditions on 610,000 acres of public, State, and privately owned rangelands in the Altar Valley within the District, as illustrated in *Exhibit D*, attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, designating land as wilderness does not assure its preservation. Left in an undisturbed or natural state, these lands are highly susceptible to wildland wildfires, insect infestation and disease, all of which degrades the natural and human environment; and

WHEREAS, because of the predominance of federal land in within the District, the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the cooperators of the District and their businesses depend on the manner in which these lands and their resources are used and access to these lands; and

WHEREAS, all of the District's cooperators and their businesses are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize federal lands and their resources, including the forest products industry, livestock grazing, mining and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the Arizona economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social well-being of Pima County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The Pima Natural Resource Conservation District's southern boundary overlaps 55 miles of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, 25 miles of the southern boundary of the United States between Nogales and Yuma is nothing more than a frequently vandalized 4-strand barbed-wire cattle fence; and

WHEREAS, the Biden Administration halted construction of the border wall before it was finished, leaving gaps where illegal immigrants and dangerous contraband funnel through the District's southern boundary onto District cooperators' ranches; and

WHEREAS, the failure of the federal government to secure the international boundary exposes the District's cooperators and their businesses to theft and violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, each alien who crosses the southern border illegally leaves an average of 8 pounds of litter; and

WHEREAS, illegal trafficking through the borderlands results in increased environmental damages due to wildcat roads, trampled soils, permanent vegetation destruction, introduction of invasive, fire-prone buffelgrass, wildfires on cooperators' ranches that are deliberately or inadvertently caused by illegal entrants; and

WHEREAS, land use restrictions and roadless designations impede the ability of law enforcement to function effectively in natural areas set aside for conservation, creating a protected corridor for illegal and violent trafficking of people, illegal narcotics, illegal weapons and even terrorists through the lands owned or leased by the District's cooperators; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Aboard (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 and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least 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, some 680 million acres of our Nation's lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in their natural state, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources; and

WHEREAS, no constitutional or statutory authority exists 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; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, is likely to cause significant injury to the District's cooperators and their businesses by depriving them of access to public lands and national forest system lands and preventing the productive use of these lands' resources; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of some 680 million acres of federal lands from multiple use and placement of such lands in permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economies of many western states, including Arizona, and in particular rural areas of the Pima Natural

Resource Conservation District whose cooperators depend on access to federal lands for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, will conflict with the plans, policies and programs of the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District as expressed in The Pima Natural Resource District Long Range Plan and Conservation Strategy, 2019-2024, adopted May 2, 2018, as illustrated in *Exhibit E*, attached hereto, which obligates the federal government to coordinate its policy development with the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District as also required by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at 216(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant federal agencies to “submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District, State of Arizona, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation’s lands in its natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The board considers that there is sufficient land currently preserved in the District; there is consequently no need for another acre to be removed from production of minerals, food and fiber for America.
3. The Board further opposes the designation of federal lands and national forests within the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District as wilderness, wilderness study areas, non-wilderness areas managed “to protect wilderness characteristics,” wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
4. The Board supports the continued management of the public lands and the national forests under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, recognizing the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber, and in careful coordination with The Pima Natural Resource Conservation District to ensure consistency with the District’s and its cooperators’ land use plans and land management policies, as required by law.
5. The Board supports maintaining and enhancing public access to public lands and national forests and opposes road closures, road decommissioning, moratoria on road construction, and other limitations on public access for the purpose of fulfilling the 30 x 30 program’s objectives.
6. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Arizona’s water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs 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 Arizona law.

7. The Board opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.

8. The Board maintains that the designation of public lands and national forest lands as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives may lawfully occur, if at all, only through the planning process mandated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (for public lands) or the National Forest Management Act (for national forest lands), including public notice and an opportunity to comment, analysis and disclosure of the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District, its cooperators and their businesses, and careful coordination with the District to ensure consistency with the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District's land use plans and land management policies.

9. The Board also maintains that any non-federal lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment 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 the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District, its cooperators and their businesses.

10. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture and all other relevant Federal and State agencies; and

DATED this 22nd day of April, 2021.

ATTEST:

Chris Postel Chris Postel
Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE PIMA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
STATE OF ARIZONA

By: Cindy Coping Cindy Coping, Vice-Chair for Jim Chilton, Chairman

Upon motion duly made and seconded the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the following vote:

Supervisors:

Jim Chilton	AYE
Cindy Coping	AYE
Jonathan Duhamel	AYE
Patricia King	AYE
Andrew McGibbon	AYE