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### SB44-15/16: Regarding Federally-Owned Public Lands

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1                   **The Associated Students of the University of Montana**  
2                   **Resolution Regarding Federally-Owned Public Lands**

3                                   **March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

4                                   **SB44-15/16**

5                   **Authored by: Brennan Cain, Student-At-Large; Sam Forstag, ASUM Senator**  
6                   **Sponsored by: Antonio Morsette, ASUM Senator; Ryann Carlson, ASUM Senator**

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9                   Whereas, Montana’s public lands are an essential part of our natural heritage;

10  
11                   Whereas, Public lands are part of our high quality of life, with 71% of Montanans  
12                   utilizing these beautiful areas annually;

13  
14                   Whereas, Public lands are a major driver of Montana’s economy, producing six (6)  
15                   billion dollars of annual economic activity statewide;

16  
17                   Whereas, Our public lands secure 403 million dollars in annual state tax revenue;

18  
19                   Whereas, 70% of business owners say “the Montana outdoor lifestyle” was a factor  
20                   in deciding to locate or expand their business in Montana;

21  
22                   Whereas, Montana counties containing significant public land added jobs at an  
23                   annual rate almost four (4) times faster than peers;

24  
25                   Whereas, Protected natural amenities like pristine scenery and wildlife help sustain  
26                   property values and attract new business investment throughout our state;

27  
28                   Whereas, There is a growing effort from groups such as the American Land Council  
29                   to sell federally-owned lands back to the states in which they reside;

30  
31                   Whereas, Legislative efforts, such as the Sportsman’s Heritage and Recreation  
32                   Enhancement Act and Congress’s 2015 decision not to renew the Land and Water  
33                   Conservation Fund, are detrimental to public lands;

34  
35                   Whereas, Montana Legislatures produced twelve (12) bills compromising our public  
36                   lands in the 2015 legislature;

37  
38                   Whereas, Western states do not have budgets for the maintenance and upkeep of  
39                   these lands, and would thus need to sell much of them into private ownership;

40  
41                   Whereas, Public lands are an integral piece of The University of Montana’s (UM)  
42                   efforts to recruit and retain students;

43  
44                   Whereas, UM depends on federally-owned public lands for educational  
45                   opportunities, such as field work and experiential learning;

46

47 Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the Associated Students of the University of  
48 Montana (ASUM) supports the continued public ownership of lands in our state;

49  
50 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that ASUM condemns any efforts to transfer  
51 our federal public lands into state ownership;

52  
53 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that a copy of this resolution and a letter  
54 voicing ASUM's support of public lands be sent to: Governor Steve Bullock, U.S.  
55 Senator Steve Daines, U.S. Senator Jon Tester, Congressman Ryan Zinke.

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58 Passed by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

59  
60 Passed by ASUM Senate: \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

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62  
63  
64 \_\_\_\_\_  
65 Sam Forstag,  
66 Chair of Sustainability Board

\_\_\_\_\_

Betsy Story,  
Chair of the Senate