



FACT SHEET

Oppose State Takeover of NEPA Analysis

WHY NEPA IS IMPORTANT

The National Environmental Policy Act, signed into law by President Nixon, was our country's first major law establishing national environmental priorities. It was also landmark legislation regarding public transparency and accountability. Today, we take for granted that the public has a right to participate in federal decision-making processes, but in fact it was NEPA that first established this right.

Implementation of NEPA on our federal lands triggers numerous other important federal laws, such as those requiring multiple-use management, historic preservation laws, endangered species protection, the Freedom of Information Act and more. NEPA requires that the federal government evaluate the environmental impacts of their proposed actions, and inform and engage the public in these assessments and decisions. The NEPA process is complex — balancing many competing and sometimes conflicting national and local priorities.

REASONS TO OPPOSE STATE TAKEOVER OF NEPA:

- ***Our national public lands belong to all Americans.*** The state of Wyoming is ill-suited to objectively evaluate and balance the many national interests for these lands. We need the national outlook in the NEPA process to protect these lands from short-sighted exploitation. Wyoming citizens have repeatedly shown they do not support transfer of ownership or management of these lands to the state.
- ***The proposal is not legal.*** There is no such thing as state “primacy” for NEPA. We would need to see Congress change many laws to forward this effort. The legislature has far more important and pragmatic issues to focus on.
- ***The state has no experience managing lands for multiple use.*** Our state trust lands are managed for only one purpose – to generate revenue.
- ***This would require a tremendous growth in state government, state regulation and the state's budget.*** The state has no laws, staffing or expertise on the requirements of implementing NEPA – which is massive in scope. We'd have to build a bureaucracy around this effort.
- ***It would not generate any additional revenue to the state.*** The state's own 2016 report¹ on this topic concluded “We would not anticipate any substantial gains in revenue production or additional sources of revenue with transfer of management – certainly not enough to offset the enormous costs such an endeavor would likely entail.”

¹ The legislature commissioned a report on this topic in 2016. You can find the State's *Study on Management of Public Lands* in this [Casper Star-Tribune article](#).