



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 17, 2014

## Obama EPA Hands Control Over Wyoming City to Indian Tribes

In apparent defiance of federal law and U.S. court rulings, unelected bureaucrats at the [increasingly out-of-control](#) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other Obama administration departments unilaterally purported to grant control over the city of Riverton, Wyoming, to tribal authorities for the Wind River Indian tribes. At least two smaller towns are also affected.



The scheme appears to illustrate a [growing United Nations-linked trend](#) being witnessed across the United States and [the world](#). In essence, vast amounts of private land and [even entire towns](#) are being taken over by authorities under various pretexts — UN agreements, [Agenda 21 “sustainability,”](#) and [supposed concerns about indigenous peoples](#) — to advance a radical agenda targeting private property rights.

In Wyoming, the deeply controversial executive-branch machinations that purport to place Riverton, Kinnear, and Pavillion inside tribal boundaries have already sparked an outcry among residents and state officials. The battle, however, has only just begun, with Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead and his administration vowing to fight back.

“It is outrageous to me that a regulatory agency has proposed changing jurisdictional boundaries established by history and the courts,” Gov. Mead was quoted as saying in news reports. “I have asked the attorney general to challenge this decision and defend the existing boundaries of the reservation.”

Among other major problems, the EPA ruling, made in consultation with the Obama administration’s Department of Interior and the disgraced Justice Department, reportedly makes the city of Riverton ineligible for many state and local services, including law enforcement and emergency response. It also raises numerous concerns over taxation, regulation, and other issues involving jurisdiction.

For now, though, state officials have been instructed by the governor to continue operating as usual while the state government prepares to battle the Obama administration in court if necessary. The implications of the case, of course, extend far beyond the fate of the 10,000 or so residents now supposedly residing on Indian land.

While the boundary dispute has been ongoing for decades, Wyoming officials and experts say Congress settled the question more than a century ago — along with the courts in subsequent rulings. The Obama administration, however, apparently did not agree, handing over more than a million acres to the tribes.

According to an analysis of [government documents](#), the EPA decision stemmed from a request by Wind



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River Indian tribes to be “treated as a state” under environmental regulatory schemes. Once approved, the ruling allows tribal authorities to receive more federal taxpayer dollars under the guise of implementing and enforcing various EPA regulations. Everything from water and air to land use is involved.

“My deep concern is about an administrative agency of the federal government altering a state’s boundary and going against over 100 years of history and law,” Gov. Mead said in a [statement](#). “This should be a concern to all citizens because, if the EPA can unilaterally take land away from a state, where will it stop?”

The governor also thanked the Wyoming attorney general and his staff for urgently preparing a thorough review of the historical record on the issue. “This analysis shows how flawed the EPA was in its legal justification for its decision,” Mead said, adding that all avenues would be pursued. “The federal government clearly had a predetermined outcome it sought to uphold.”

In a [petition](#) to EPA bosses asking the agency to reconsider and stay its decision, Wyoming Attorney General Peter Michael said the Obama administration’s scheme depends on “a host of faulty factual and legal conclusions.” The document cites a broad range of statutes, treaties, and court decisions, arguing that the EPA essentially cherry-picked arguments in a manner “more akin to advocacy” to reach a determination that is simply “wrong.”

The attorney general said that the decision would strip the state of its sovereign right to exercise jurisdiction over lands “rightly within its control” and that it must be overturned — or at least delayed until the courts can review it. “A failure to do so will likely lead to civil and criminal jurisdictional turmoil, irreparably harming the public interest,” he warned, echoing widespread concerns.

State lawmakers also spoke out about the EPA scheming and vowed to resist. “This is an alarming action when you have a federal agency step in and start to undo congressional acts that has really been our history for 108 years ... with the stroke of a pen without talking to the biggest groups impacted,” state Sen. Leland Christensen [told](#) The Daily Caller. Those affected, of course, “would be the city of Riverton and the state of Wyoming,” the lawmaker added.

Wyoming’s delegation to the U.S. Congress has also expressed deep concerns. “The EPA’s decision has in effect overturned a law that has been governing land and relationships for more than 100 years,” wrote Sen. Mike Enzi, Sen. John Barrasso, and Rep. Cynthia Lummis. “We are also very concerned about the political ramifications this decision could have for the tribes and the state of Wyoming.”

In a separate statement, Sen. Barrasso blasted the Obama administration for again thinking it “can ignore the law of the land when it suits their agenda.” Just this week, in fact, Obama [publicly announced](#) that he would no longer wait for Congress or legislation to impose his agenda, vowing to govern by executive decree instead.

Also this month, the EPA, itself created by an executive order, announced drastic new regulations supposedly aimed at reducing “pollution” from power plants in Wyoming, drawing outrage. Nationwide, meanwhile, the out-of-control agency is facing increasing scrutiny after its most highly paid bureaucrat and chief “global warming” propagandist was [sentenced to prison for fraud](#). Its top bosses were also facing [multiple accusations of criminal activity](#).

However, the agency continues to issue gargantuan amounts of new “regulations,” including new schemes that would purport to put [virtually every body of water under federal control](#). Separately, the EPA is under fire for [radical new decrees](#) that will shut down hundreds of power plants across America



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under the guise of fighting “global warming” and “carbon pollution” — [also known as CO<sub>2</sub>, or human breath](#).

Other arms of the Obama administration are engaged in similar shenanigans. In November, for example, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell brazenly threatened that Obama would bypass Congress and start seizing even more land under the guise of creating “national monuments.” Jewell, who is currently waging a witch-hunt against “climate deniers” in the bureaucracy she runs, vowed that the administration would not “hold its breath forever” waiting for Congress to obey.

“The president will not hesitate,” she [told](#) the *Los Angeles Times* last November. “I can tell you that there are places that are ripe for setting aside, with a tremendous groundswell of public support.” Of course, the U.S. government already claims ownership over some 650 million acres of land — about a third of America’s total landmass.

Members of Congress, however, are fighting back on that front as well. “Any action that has the potential to impact land management must be locally driven, and not spearheaded in Washington by the stroke of a President’s pen,” said Rep. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), who joined with dozens of lawmakers in sending Jewell a letter about the scheme. “It is deeply troubling that the Administration is willing to move forward unilaterally on these important decisions.”

Similar machinations have been accelerating in other parts of the world, too — especially Latin America. In Brazil, for example, *The New American* reported last year that federal troops wearing UN logos, acting under executive decrees from [radical President Dilma Rousseff](#), were [evicting entire towns at gun point](#).

The atrocities were being perpetrated under the guise of returning land to Indians, many of whom said the territory had never been theirs to begin with. In Panama, the UN has also been demanding that authorities surrender more land to Indian tribes — all of which are expected to adhere to planetary decrees under the UN “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

At the UN, of course, a wide range of pretexts are being used to advance an agenda that is deeply and openly hostile to property rights — with [Agenda 21 and so-called “sustainable development” among the key mechanisms](#). The ultimate goals, however, have already been made clear by the UN itself.

In its Habitat I Conference Report, for example, the UN claimed: “[Land] cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market. Private land ownership is also a principal instrument of accumulation and concentration of wealth and therefore contributes to social injustice; if unchecked, it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes... Public control of land use is therefore indispensable.”

As *The New American* magazine [documented](#) last year, Indians and indigenous people are also becoming an important component of the anti-property rights agenda. In 2012, the UN “Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People,” James Anaya, even claimed that Americans should return vast tracts of land to Native Americans — [including the iconic Mount Rushmore in South Dakota](#).

Such a move, he claimed, would help put the U.S. government closer into compliance with the so-called UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples — a controversial scheme that Obama endorsed in 2010 after the U.S. government had originally rejected it. The EPA machinations appear to fit in nicely with the broader agenda.



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