



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on June 15, 2023

Western State Officials Battle Biden Land Grab

South Dakota Republican [Governor](#) Kristi Noem testifies Thursday on Capitol Hill, defending her state against what Western congressmen call a federal land grab.

Wyoming's Republican Governor Mark Gordon joins her to throw support behind [House Resolution 3397](#), a measure introduced in May by Republican congressmen from Western states and referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

The bill aims to stop the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from implementing a proposed rule that would expand its power without Congressional authority.

According to one of the bill's sponsors, Republican Representative [John Curtis of Utah](#), the new rule undermines an existing federal "multiple use and sustained yield" law — which requires the BLM to allow various activities on public land, such as mineral development, grazing, forestry, and recreation. In the name of so-called preservation, BLM wants to drastically restrict or even prevent access to federal lands.

Western Caucus chairman [Dan Newhouse](#) of Washington pointed out that "locking up lands with preservation designations" often has detrimental effects. Idaho Republican [Russ Fulcher](#) agreed, saying the new rule works against the goal of managing areas where fire risks are high. Both Newhouse and Fulcher have cosponsored HR 3397.

Governor Noem sent a [letter](#) on Wednesday to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland opposing the BLM rule. Five Republican governors — from Utah, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Wyoming — added their names, saying the proposal would fundamentally alter farming, ranching, and industry in their states. According to Curtis, 90 percent of the bureau's 245 million acres are located in the West.

Noem also [announced](#) she will tell the House committee that "Washington bureaucrats do not know how to manage land better than the folks who have been stewarding it for generations," and that "BLM's proposed rule would devastate conservation and management efforts, harm wildlife, slow economic growth and endanger public safety."



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