

**Statement for the Record  
of the  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
before the  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,  
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining  
on  
S. 2123  
July 30, 2014**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 2123, the School District 318 Land Exchange Act, which directs the Secretary to accept an offer to exchange certain Federal and non-Federal parcels of land in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. The Department supports S. 2123, which is a thoughtful effort toward resolving a long-standing request of School District 318.

The bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to (1) accept an offer by the Minnesota Independent School District number 318 in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, to convey to the United States approximately 1.6 acres of specified non-federal land (including any structures on it), and (2) convey to the District in exchange approximately 1.3 acres of specified U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) land. The Federal land described in the bill adjoins Robert J. Elkington Middle School. The Federal land is used to store equipment and vehicles and because of its proximity to the campus, as well as the security fencing, it is suitable for management by the School District. The non-Federal land to be exchanged is closer to the USGS Minnesota Water Science Center and has better access to that facility. All structures on the Federal and non-Federal land are to be included in the exchange. School District 318 and the USGS have discussed exchanging these parcels of land for over a decade and so we appreciate Senator Franken introducing S. 2123 to resolve this matter through legislation.

The bill requires valuation by an independent appraiser in accordance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal land acquisitions as applicable to land exchanges. The values of the Federal and non-Federal lands to be exchanged would be equalized by payment to the Secretary. We note two technical components of the bill that we feel we can work with the committee to provide additional clarity. First, the bill does not address the issue of equalization in the event the value of the non-Federal land to be exchanged exceeds the value of the Federal land. Second, S. 2123 does not address the issue of which parties to the exchange will assume the responsibility of funding the property valuation. We look forward to working with the Committee to address these technical issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department on S. 2123. We appreciate the efforts of the sponsors and the Committee to resolve this long-standing issue.