

**Statement of
Mike Pool
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Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests & Mining
S. 2018, Conveyance of Reversionary Interest, Glennallen, Alaska
April 21, 2016**

Thank you for inviting the Department of the Interior to testify on S. 2018, which provides for the conveyance of the Federal government's reversionary interest in certain land located in the City of Glennallen, Alaska, to SEND North, a not-for-profit organization located in Anchorage, Alaska. While the Department supports the goal of conveying the reversionary interest to SEND North, we cannot support S. 2018 in its current form. The Department could support S. 2018 if it were amended to ensure the payment of fair market value for the conveyance of the reversionary interest.

Background

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regularly transfers public land to local governments and nonprofits for a variety of public purposes. These transfers are typically accomplished under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) or through direction supplied through specific Acts of Congress. The R&PP Act is a statute frequently used by the BLM to help states, local communities, and nonprofit organizations obtain lands at no or low cost for important public purposes. Examples include parks, schools, hospitals and other health facilities, fire and law enforcement facilities, courthouses, social services facilities, and public works. Because these lands are transferred at far below market value, R&PP conveyances and many similarly legislated conveyances include a reversionary clause requiring that lands be used for public purposes or revert to the Federal government. Over the years, the BLM has addressed many requests to release the Federal government's reversionary interest in such lands and has consistently required the payment of fair market value for the reversionary interest.

In 1961, a 210-acre parcel of Federal land was patented to the Central Alaska Mission under the authority of the R&PP Act. The Mission came to Glennallen, Alaska, to assist the Glennallen community and the surrounding area with not-for-profit educational, medical, and religious services. The patent was subsequently transferred under the provisions of the R&PP Act to the non-profit organization SEND North.

The BLM is currently considering a request by SEND North to purchase at fair market value the Federal government's reversionary interest in the 210 acres patented in 1961. On April 7, 2016, the BLM published a Notice of Realty Action in the *Federal Register* providing an opportunity to comment on the proposed sale. The public comment period for this action will remain open until May 9, 2016. The proposed non-competitive direct sale is consistent with the BLM's East Alaska Resource Management Plan approved in September 2007. The BLM understands that

after acquiring the reversionary interest, SEND North would like to sell or transfer the parcels for commercial development without threat of reversion for breach of patent conditions.

S. 2018

S. 2018 would convey, without consideration, the reversionary interest of the United States in the land identified in the bill to SEND North, and requires the organization to pay all costs associated with the conveyance.

The BLM supports the goal of conveying the reversionary interest in this land to SEND North, but cannot support S. 2018 as currently written. The BLM recommends amending the legislation to ensure the payment of fair market value for the reversionary interest.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with the sponsor and the Committee to address the needs of the landowner and the city of Glennallen.