

**Statement of  
Gregory Smith  
Acting Associate Deputy Chief  
National Forest System  
Forest Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**Before the  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining  
United States Senate**

**Concerning S. 1888 and H.R. 1241 (S. 1888), “to facilitate a land exchange involving certain  
National Forest System lands in the Inyo National Forest, and for other purposes.”  
July 30, 2014**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) views regarding S. 1888.

S. 1888 would allow the Secretary of Agriculture, in a proposed land exchange involving the conveyance of certain National Forest System land located within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, to accept for acquisition certain non-Federal lands in California lying outside the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, if the Secretary determines that the acquisition of the non-Federal lands is desirable for National Forest System purposes. In addition, S. 1888 would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to accept a cash equalization payment in excess of 25 percent, which would be deposited into the account in the Treasury of the United States, established by the Sisk Act, and would be made available to the Secretary for acquisition of land for addition to the National Forest System.

The Department supports S. 1888 as it will facilitate acquisition of highly-desirable parcels currently located outside the National Forest boundary. It will also simplify the land exchange process by authorizing a cash equalization payment in excess of 25 percent. All requirements otherwise applicable to the land exchange would continue to apply.

Mammoth Mountain Lodge Redevelopment LLC, commonly known as Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA), wishes to acquire 20 acres of National Forest System land in the Main Lodge area, currently managed as part of a Ski Area Term Special Use Permit, so it can redevelop aging lodging facilities, increase capacity, and develop employee housing and whole and fractional ownership condominiums. These latter plans are inconsistent with its Ski Area Term Special Use Permit.

MMSA has selected 12 non-Federal parcels suitable for acquisition in the Inyo, Stanislaus, Plumas, and Eldorado National Forests for the proposed exchange. These parcels were selected based on priorities identified in the respective Forest’s Land Acquisition Plans, and include two Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) parcels that are leased by the Forest Service as administrative sites. The southern parcel houses the Interagency Visitor Center near Lone Pine, California. The northern parcel is adjacent to the White Mountain Ranger Station in

Bishop California, and serves as a storage area for construction materials, recreation supplies and larger maintenance trucks. Legislation is needed to acquire the LADWP parcels because they are located outside the declared boundary of the Inyo National Forest.

In addition, because the values of the agreed upon Federal and non-Federal lands are not likely to be within the 25 percent range limit as provided in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), legislation is needed to authorize the Forest Service to accept cash equalization in excess of the limit. The Department recommends the legislation be modified to clarify that funds deposited in the Sisk Act account shall be made available to the Secretary without further appropriation to acquire land in the State of California as additions to the National Forest System.

I am happy to answer any questions you might have.