



Sierra Club Endorses

The Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3324,

and

The Arizona Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3337

Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3324

The Sierra Club endorses the Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3324, which recognizes the economic impacts to ranchers and their families when they voluntarily release their public land grazing permits. The legislation offers a fair price for relinquishing commercial livestock grazing permits on public lands. H.R. 3324 establishes a generous but fair price of \$175 per Animal Unit Month for surrendering grazing permits. This compensation could permit ranchers to restructure ranching operations to private lands or to retire debt.

The western landscape varies immensely in productivity over time. Cycles of drought change the availability of forage for wildlife and livestock from year to year. Currently drought covers much of the West. A United States Geological Survey report indicates the drought could continue for another decade. A similar prolonged drought occurred in the 50s and 60s. Under such conditions, ranchers have difficulty maintaining economic stability while dependent on marginally productive public lands.

The recent Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DIES) accompanying the new proposed grazing regulations indicate that arid lands have not responded well to grazing management. The DEIS also reveals that only 42% of streams were in proper functioning condition in 2001, even though the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) set a goal of reaching 75% in 1997. The health of western landscapes is in continued need of improvements.

H.R.3324 allows ranchers a chance to discontinue public lands grazing without serious economic consequences. At the same time natural processes can be restored on some of the nation's most marginally productive rangelands. In the long run H.R. 3324 will promote sustainable and thriving populations of native plants and animals, as well as a more sustainable future for families.

Arizona Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3337

The Grand Canyon Chapter and the national Sierra Club endorses the Arizona Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act, H.R. 3337. We join as many as 180 *Arizona ranchers who also endorse the Arizona Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act.*

The legislation recognizes the economic impacts to Arizona ranchers and their families from voluntarily giving up their public land grazing permits. Arizona Rep. Raul Grijalva introduced H.R. 3337, in part, as a resolve to a long standing conflict ranchers and conservationists. Rep. Grijalva recently wrote, "The cooperation between the two groups, and the ground-breaking plan they have created, have paved the way for the bipartisan Arizona Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act..."

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