

Rep. Gosar Statement for the Record on HR 7099

Before the Natural Resources

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands legislative hearing on seven public lands bills, June 18, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. EDT

Thank you, Madam Chair, I appreciate your holding the hearing today and Chairman Grijalva's testimony on HR 7099. I want to find a way to join the gentleman in support of this legislation which will continue important educational programs done at the University of Arizona on range land management and veterinary medicine. As one of the original land grant universities the land-grant legacy emphasizing educational access, research and outreach remains an important core of the mission of this important University, and it is that land legacy that continues today through these programs.

My question is why we are extorting the State of Arizona, the operator of the University, for additional land by forcing them to make this an exchange instead of simply ceding the land to the State. As the sponsor just recognized, this property has been maintained and improved by the University for a long time for an important educational purpose. When the mapping errors came to light, the effort to correct this was attempted administratively, which failed to reach agreement. Now we are forced to rectify this legislatively, and in doing so there is no reason that Congress must demand land in tribute from the State and University in exchange for this land.

I believe we can, and should, simply cede the 13.3-acre parcel where the V-V Ranch headquarters has been located since 1998 to the State of Arizona title free and allow the University to keep the additional acreage, being demanded here in exchange, for other important uses.

I get that my colleagues on the other side believe that there can never be enough federal land and that in the coming weeks we will be voting on legislation to establish a half billion dollar a year federal land buying spree for generations to come.

But in this case, for this university, for the people of Arizona, for these important educational programs, and since we must do this effort legislatively, maybe once we could just set aside our extortion of our citizens to use our lands and just yield the land to the State. I hope to work with the sponsor of this legislation to enact legislation that protects the University, supports its historic mission and allows it to continue the education of our students who are our future.