

**Testimony of
Councilwoman Terry A. Sayre
City of Tulare, California
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands**

Hearing on H.R. 8913, the Tulare Youth Recreation and Women's History Enhancement Act

July 1, 2026

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 8913, the Tulare Youth Recreation and Women's History Enhancement Act.

On behalf of the City of Tulare, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Congressman David Valadao for introducing this legislation and Congressman Vince Fong for joining in support of this important local priority.

It has long been the City's desire to acquire the Historic Women's Clubhouse and Tulare Skate Park to preserve both locations as pivotal community assets. H.R. 8913 provides a narrow and practical solution to this longstanding priority. The bill would authorize the conveyance of, and remove the reversionary interest of the United States in, the two parcels of land currently owned by Union Pacific Railroad upon which the Clubhouse and Skate Park are located.

To that end, the City and Union Pacific Railroad have reached an agreement on the terms of purchase for these parcels. However, because the properties remain subject to a federal reversionary interest dating back to the original railroad land grant, the City cannot complete the acquisition without Congressional action.

This bill does not create a new federal program and does not request a federal appropriation. It simply clears a title issue so the City can acquire the land to protect the existing public uses, and paves the way for responsible long-term investments in facilities that already serve the Tulare community.

The Tulare Women's Clubhouse is one of the most historically significant buildings in the City of Tulare. Originally constructed in 1882, the building was dedicated as a Library Hall and became one of Tulare's earliest civic gathering places.

Shortly after its dedication, the building was opened for broader community use. It has served as a reading center, a recreation center, and a venue for banquets, plays, dances, school functions, and civic affairs. Over the years, it became known as the Tulare Women's Clubhouse and became closely associated with the leadership, service, and civic contributions of women in our community.

The Clubhouse reflects several important parts of Tulare's identity: our railroad history, our early civic development, our community gathering traditions, and the role of women's organizations in strengthening public life. In a city where many historic buildings have been lost to fire, demolition, or deterioration, this building remains one of the few historic public structures still capable of being restored and returned to active community use.

The Tulare Women's Clubhouse has endured structural and safety concerns that have prevented its expansion and full operability. The City has taken steps to preserve the building, including committing funds to weatherize and stabilize it while a permanent solution is pursued. However, the City cannot responsibly undertake a full rehabilitation of the property without clear title and long-term control of the land. Restoration of a historic public building requires careful planning, public investment, and certainty that the facility will remain available for community use. H.R. 8913 provides that certainty.

If the City completes the acquisition, the City will restore the Clubhouse and return it to public use. The vision is for a multipurpose community venue that can once again host civic functions, cultural events, performances, dances, banquets, educational workshops, and more. Restoring the Clubhouse would preserve an irreplaceable historic asset that will also help support downtown and West Tulare revitalization.

The second parcel addressed by H.R. 8913 is home to the Tulare Skate Park. This facility provides a safe and accessible place for young people and families to gather, recreate, and build community outside.

For many youth, skate parks are more than recreational facilities. They are positive public spaces that encourage physical activity, provide a sense of belonging, and offer a constructive outlet in their community. City ownership of the underlying property will allow Tulare to protect long-term public access, plan future improvements, and ensure the skate park remains a stable recreational asset for future generations.

H.R. 8913 is fundamentally about local stewardship. The City is not asking for funding or operational assistance. Merely, the City is asking Congress to remove a legal barrier that prevents Tulare from acquiring land that is already being used for public purposes.

This legislation will allow the City to preserve local history, protect youth recreation, and ensure both properties remain available for public benefit. It reflects a cooperative approach among the City of Tulare, Union Pacific Railroad, and our Congressional delegation.

The City of Tulare strongly supports H.R. 8913 because it provides a direct and necessary solution to a longstanding local issue. By authorizing the conveyance of these parcels and removing the federal reversionary interest, Congress can allow Tulare to preserve a historic landmark, protect a youth recreation facility, and make long-term investments in public-serving community assets.

The Tulare Women's Clubhouse has been part of our community since 1882. The Tulare Skate Park continues to serve our youth today. With H.R. 8913, the City will be able to protect both properties and ensure they continue serving Tulare residents for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am available should the committee have any questions.