Enrolled Copy **H.C.R. 8**

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION ON RANGELANDS

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Michael E. Noel

Senate Sponsor: David P. Hinkins

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor calls on the President of the United States to direct federal agencies that implement management practices that increase soil carbon sequestration to develop comprehensive plans that achieve the maximum amount of carbon sequestration possible and increase the economic and environmental productivity of rangelands and urges similar action within each state.

Highlighted Provisions:

This concurrent resolution:

- declares that emphasizing improved soil health as the primary means of removing atmospheric carbon dioxide represents a win/win solution to the current climate change controversy;
- calls on the President of the United States to direct those federal agencies currently permitted by law to implement management practices that increase soil carbon sequestration to develop, in a timely fashion, comprehensive plans to achieve the maximum amount of carbon sequestration possible in ways that will increase the economic and environmental productivity of rangelands;
- finds that these actions, if taken by the President of the United States, fit firmly within the purposes of the President's Executive Order 13653 and other statements made by the President;
- calls upon the leader of each legislative house in each of the other states to implement improved soil health as the primary means of removing atmospheric

carbon dioxide to the maximum extent possible; and

▸ urges Utah state agencies with authority to manage lands to increase soil carbon sequestration, or that may encourage greater soil carbon sequestration on private lands, to also develop plans to accomplish these goals for the benefit of the environment and citizens of the state of Utah.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, the national debate over whether and to what extent human activity is contributing to climate change is increasingly heated and divisive;

WHEREAS, the federal government has identified carbon dioxide as a pollutant and as the major contributor to climate change;

WHEREAS, many of the proposals and technologies being considered by the federal government to reduce carbon dioxide emissions would, if implemented, cause major dislocation and great economic harm to the state of Utah and the nation;

WHEREAS, because of these negative impacts, many citizens strenuously oppose implementing the current carbon dioxide reduction proposals;

WHEREAS, forests, rangelands, and agricultural soils have long been recognized as major carbon sinks for removing and storing atmospheric carbon;

WHEREAS, these terrestrial carbon sinks have become less effective in storing atmospheric carbon in recent decades;

WHEREAS, due to sub-optimal management practices on vast acreages, terrestrial carbon sinks are actually releasing previously stored carbon into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide and therefore contributing to atmospheric carbon dioxide loading;

WHEREAS, in recent years, scientific research has resulted in much better understanding of the dynamics of healthy soil communities that are the active mechanism to sequester atmospheric carbon;

WHEREAS, in recent decades the development and application of advanced forestry, rangeland management, and agricultural practices have been demonstrated conclusively at the experimental, farm, and landscape scale to improve the health of these soil communities, thereby generating a wide range of economic and environmental benefits;

WHEREAS, these benefits include increased productivity and profitability of lands, restored native bio-diversity, improved watershed health and quality, improved quality and quantity of water, better wildlife habitat, increased resistance to drought, and in the long term, the sequestration of vast amounts of atmospheric carbon in the soil;

WHEREAS, while these advanced practices have been widely demonstrated in various locations, including Deseret Ranch in Utah, they have not been incorporated into federal land management practices to any significant degree;

WHEREAS, current unwise and unscientific rangeland management practices mandated by the federal government are not only the major cause of the continued widespread deterioration of public rangeland, and all the associated economic and environmental harm, but also are contributing to atmospheric carbon dioxide loading through the loss of carbon dioxide sequestered in these soils;

WHEREAS, far superior grazing policies, including those widely demonstrated at Deseret Ranch and other locations, could easily be adopted by federal management agencies and would not only reverse this current decline but would also heal ecosystems;

WHEREAS, these more effective grazing policies would produce a wide range of economic and environmental benefits;

WHEREAS, proven advanced forestry practices would, if adopted by federal land management agencies, substantially improve the health and productivity of forest lands, greatly reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, restore native biodiversity, and generate a wide range of other economic and environmental benefits while vastly increasing the amount of atmospheric carbon being sequestered;

WHEREAS, productive partnerships between federal, state, and local government agencies and private entities have shown great promise as they have implemented these best

management practices on a landscape scale;

WHEREAS, terrestrial carbon sinks offer immense potential for removing vast amounts of atmospheric carbon;

WHEREAS, scientists calculate that if best management practices were applied to forests, rangelands, and agricultural lands, the lands have the potential to sequester all of the atmospheric carbon produced by human activities from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the present day;

WHEREAS, unlike the disruptive, unaffordable, and economically unsustainable approaches now being pursued, applying these techniques to sequester carbon long-term will result in net benefit to the public and private interests;

WHEREAS, this approach to carbon sequestration is clearly a win/win solution to the climate change debate;

WHEREAS, this approach effectively meets the concerns of those who believe that atmospheric carbon dioxide levels must be reduced while alleviating the concerns of those who oppose current approaches due to the harm to consumers, the state of Utah, and the nation because this approach generates major economic and environmental benefits at little or no net cost;

WHEREAS, Presidential Executive Order 13653 was signed in November 2013 and directs federal agencies to prepare to deal with the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, this executive order has set as a goal for all federal agencies with any responsibility for natural resource management to "increase…carbon sequestration":

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, declares that emphasizing improved soil health as the primary means of removing atmospheric carbon dioxide represents a win/win solution to the current climate change controversy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor call on the President of the United States to direct those federal agencies currently permitted by law to implement management practices that increase soil carbon sequestration to develop, in a timely

fashion, comprehensive plans to achieve the maximum amount of carbon sequestration possible in ways that will increase the economic and environmental productivity of rangelands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor find that these actions, if taken by the President of the United States, fit firmly within the purposes of the President's Executive Order 13653 and other statements made by the President.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor call upon the leader of each legislative house in each of the other states to implement improved soil health as the primary means of removing atmospheric carbon dioxide to the maximum extent possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge all state agencies with authority to manage lands to increase soil carbon sequestration, or that may encourage greater soil carbon sequestration on private lands, to also develop plans to accomplish these goals for the benefit of the environment and citizens of the state of Utah.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the United States Secretary of Commerce, the United States Secretary of Energy, the United States Secretary of Transportation, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the leader of each legislative house in each of the other states, and the members of Utah's congressional delegation.