

28 Utah;

29 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Board, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established in
30 1996 after raising money to restore a portion of an original Topaz recreation hall that had been
31 used as the Boy Scouts meeting place during the period of incarceration;

32 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Board, under the direction of its founder and current
33 president, Jane Beckwith, consists of people committed to a mission of: preserving the Topaz
34 site; telling the history of incarceration during World War II; honoring the internees;
35 interpreting the impact of the experience on the internees, their families, and the residents of
36 Millard County; and educating the public in order to prevent a similar denial of American civil
37 rights from recurring;

38 WHEREAS, since its founding, the Topaz Museum Board has purchased 633 acres of
39 the original site of the Topaz Relocation Center, conducted teacher workshops, held
40 pilgrimages, and raised awareness of the history of Topaz;

41 WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Topaz site as a National
42 Historic Landmark in 2007;

43 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, has recently
44 completed an ambitious campaign that raised approximately \$3,000,000 to create the
45 long-awaited and much-needed Topaz Museum and Education Center to tell the story of
46 Topaz;

47 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center is the crowning jewel of a
48 preservation program that began in 1991 to ensure the story of Japanese American internment
49 during World War II is remembered and the site of the Topaz camp is preserved;

50 WHEREAS, the museum received many donations, including \$300,000 from the state
51 of Utah and \$1,200,000 from the National Park Service through the Japanese American
52 Confinement Sites grant program, allowing the Topaz Museum Board to complete this project;

53 WHEREAS, the Friends of Topaz, an organization created to support the Topaz
54 Museum Foundation by engaging with communities, constituents, and individuals, has played
55 an important role in promoting the mission, vitality, and success of the museum;

56 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation has maintained a strong relationship with
57 over 3,000 people, including many former internees, who have financially supported the
58 foundation's programs and whose help was essential in the completion of each of the

59 foundation's projects;

60 WHEREAS, the exhibits for the Topaz Museum and Education Center highlight the
61 personal sacrifices and contributions of more than 11,000 people incarcerated at the desolate
62 Topaz camp;

63 WHEREAS, the exhibits include a collection of 1,000 artifacts, including 110 original
64 pieces of artwork created by internees during their incarceration, over 35 video interviews, and
65 a restored recreation hall;

66 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center has become the official
67 repository for teaching, exploring, and interpreting the history of this troubled period of
68 America's past and the impact that still resonates today;

69 WHEREAS, the museum stands as a memorial to the resilient internees who tried to
70 make camp life as normal as possible and as a witness for the history of the incarceration of
71 people of Japanese ancestry during World War II;

72 WHEREAS, the installations and exhibits use cutting-edge technology combined with
73 historic perspectives to engage and educate the public about the United States Constitution and
74 civil rights;

75 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center will continue to collect and
76 safeguard artifacts, artwork, and video interviews, making them accessible to future
77 generations, and ensuring this period in American history will never be forgotten;

78 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation also protects 633 acres of the original
79 Topaz site, which is replete with evidence of gardens, walkways, concrete foundations, and
80 artifacts, giving evidence of Japanese Americans who lived there from September 11, 1942,
81 until October 31, 1945;

82 WHEREAS, visitors can learn this complex history, including information about the
83 four Supreme Court test cases from Topaz internees Min Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred
84 Korematsu, and Mitsuye Endo, by reading exhibit panels, seeing artifacts and an original
85 recreation hall, and then visiting the actual camp site;

86 WHEREAS, this total experience produces an understanding of the stark reality of what
87 happened in America to people of Japanese ancestry, the majority of whom were American
88 citizens;

89 WHEREAS, the completion of the Topaz Museum and Education Center allows

90 students, families, educators, historians, former internees, and their families to learn from the
91 artwork, artifacts, oral histories, diaries, and interpretive exhibits, and then travel 16 miles to
92 where the history occurred;

93 WHEREAS, museum docents greet visitors and answer questions beyond the scope of
94 the exhibits allowing visitors to question and contemplate poignant and significant aspects of
95 civil rights and race relations;

96 WHEREAS, in 2007, Governor Jon Huntsman Jr. spoke at the dedication of the Topaz
97 site as a National Historic Landmark;

98 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Utah State Legislature passed a resolution supporting the
99 construction of the Topaz Museum and Education Center;

100 WHEREAS, on January 18, 2013, Governor Gary Herbert proclaimed January 30,
101 2013, "Fred Korematsu Day" in Utah, honoring Mr. Korematsu on what would have been his
102 94th birthday for his lifelong efforts to assure civil liberties for all Americans, following his
103 imprisonment at Topaz and landmark Supreme Court case;

104 WHEREAS, Topaz art has been shown in five major galleries in California and Utah,
105 and in 2018 the Utah Museum of Fine Arts will host a retrospective show of the art of Chiura
106 Obata, who started the art school at Topaz;

107 WHEREAS, over 250 teachers have learned about Topaz in the Summer Field School
108 hosted by the Topaz Museum Foundation and the Utah State Office of Education and countless
109 students have visited the Topaz Museum;

110 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum website and social media accounts confirm that 5,000
111 people per month are reading about Topaz and downloading information about visiting the site;
112 and

113 WHEREAS, the grand opening of the Topaz Museum and Education Center took place
114 on July 7 and 8, 2017, and featured speeches by Senator Orrin Hatch, Representative Rob
115 Bishop, Jill Remington Love, executive director, Utah Department of Heritage and Arts, and
116 Don Tamaki, whose parents were in Topaz, a koto performance by Shirley Muramoto, a flag
117 presentation by the Latinos in Action, a presentation by Kimi Kodani Hill, a book signing by
118 Willie Ito, who was in Topaz, taiko drumming by the Ogden Buddhist Taiko Group, the puppet
119 show "E.O. 9066" by the San Francisco troupe, Lunatique Fantastique, a ribbon cutting, and
120 tours of the museum and site:

121 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
122 Governor concurring therein, recognizes the achievements of Jane Beckwith and the Topaz
123 Museum Board in bringing the vision of the Topaz Museum and Education Center to reality
124 and providing a place where residents of and visitors to the state can learn valuable lessons
125 regarding civil rights and the nation's commitment to equal justice under the law by
126 championing the resilience of the internees who remained steadfast when their government
127 wavered.

128 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor laud the efforts of
129 all those who contributed to this effort and encourage the residents of and visitors to the state to
130 take advantage of the important educational opportunities available at the Topaz Museum, 55
131 West Main, Delta, Utah.

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel