

**JOINT RESOLUTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE
GREATER CANYONLANDS REGION**

2014 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jim Dabakis

House Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This joint resolution of the Legislature calls on the United States Congress and the President of the United States to take action to protect the publicly owned, world-class resources of the Greater Canyonlands region as a natural, undeveloped area for the recreational use and enjoyment for Utahns and Americans for generations to come.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

▸ requests that the United States Congress and the President of the United States take immediate action to protect the Greater Canyonlands region as a natural, pristine, and undeveloped area for enjoyment, recreation, and use by current and future generations;

▸ finds the protection of this area to be in the best interest of Utahns and Americans; and

▸ calls for public input and discussion on how the land should best be protected for recreational purposes.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:



28 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands is a true national treasure, sweeping across a 1.5
29 million acre network of canyons and mesas filled with scientific, cultural, historic, and
30 recreational treasures;

31 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands should be protected as a natural, undeveloped area
32 for the recreational use and enjoyment of Utahns and Americans for generations to come;

33 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands is the largest undeveloped area of land remaining in
34 the continental United States;

35 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands' complex maze of gorges, plateaus, mountains,
36 basins, natural bridges, arches, and spires rivals the Grand Canyon in importance and scale;

37 WHEREAS, outdoor recreation contributes over \$5.8 billion annually to Utah's
38 economy, provides nearly \$300 million in yearly state tax revenues, and supports 65,000 Utah
39 jobs;

40 WHEREAS, these numbers do not include items such as boats, recreational vehicles,
41 land purchases and leases, and the transportation, manufacturing, leisure, and hospitality
42 industries;

43 WHEREAS, protecting the area around Canyonlands National Park will send an
44 important message to the outdoor industry that Utah and America value their industry and
45 contributions;

46 WHEREAS, such permanent protection of lands managed by the National Park Service,
47 the United States Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Forest Service would
48 create a model for effective cross-agency cooperation;

49 WHEREAS, 440,000 people visit Canyonlands National Park and the surrounding areas
50 each year to hike, camp, drive all-terrain vehicles, hunt, river raft, mountain bike, BASE jump,
51 jeep, hang glide, and dozens of other outdoor activities;

52 WHEREAS, the Greater Canyonlands region currently has over 2,000 miles of roads
53 and trails and hundreds of paths and hiking trails that provide access to unparalleled natural
54 beauty and pristine landscapes;

55 WHEREAS, Utah's pioneering spirit and independence was forged in the open frontier,
56 and Utah and its citizens have a responsibility to be good stewards of these lands and protect
57 these experiences and our heritage for future generations;

58 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands' remoteness has preserved historic and scientific

59 resources beyond the national parklands and provided unmatched opportunities for research,
60 solitude, and renewal from a largely untapped library of 12,000 years of human history, which
61 tells an unparalleled story of the southwestern frontier spanning from Ice Age mammoth
62 hunters, to ancestral puebloans, to pioneers, early settlers, and uranium prospectors;

63 WHEREAS, with isolation and good air quality, and with no towns or highways
64 crossing the region, Greater Canyonlands is one of the few places to still offer a view of stars at
65 their clearest against an absolutely black night sky;

66 WHEREAS, Greater Canyonlands also secures critical watersheds along the Colorado
67 River, Green River, Dirty Devil River, and San Rafael River, which are critical resources for
68 present and future generations;

69 WHEREAS, Canyonlands National Park was originally envisioned to encompass the
70 entire greater Canyonlands region and was included in proposals by the National Park Service
71 in 1935, President Roosevelt in 1940, Interior Secretary Udall in 1961, and President Johnson
72 in 1971;

73 WHEREAS, the federal government owns and manages most of the land found within
74 the Greater Canyonlands region; and

75 WHEREAS, there are few, if any, costs required to acquire and protect the land in its
76 entirety:

77 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
78 requests that the United States Congress and the President of the United States take immediate
79 action to protect the Greater Canyonlands region as a natural, pristine, and undeveloped area
80 for enjoyment, recreation, and use by current and future generations.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature declares the protection of the
82 Greater Canyonlands region to be in the best interest of Utahns and Americans.

83 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature calls for public input and
84 discussion on how the land should best be protected for recreational purposes.

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Majority
86 Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives,
87 the United States Secretary of the Interior, Canyonlands National Park, and the members of
88 Utah's congressional delegation.

Legislative Review Note
as of 1-6-14 8:14 AM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel