



Utilizing National Land for Opportunities and Community Key (UNLOCK) Housing

Bill Summary: This bill would include affordable housing as an eligible “public purpose” category for speedier land leasing or disposition under the Recreation & Public Purposes Act. Likewise, the bill would ensure Congressional review and enforcement of the recently created “Joint Task Force To Use Federal Lands for Affordable Housing.”

The Need for Legislation: Access to affordable housing is a challenge for many Americans. Currently, the national housing shortage has reached 7.3 million units, driven by a supply and demand imbalance. Solving this crisis requires a multi-prong strategy. For many states, this includes making more federal land available for housing development, especially for multi-family properties. In Nevada alone, the federal government owns 84.4 % of Nevada’s land, or just under 60 million acres. According to a recent study by the [American Enterprise Institute \(AEI\)](#), 1.5 million homes could be built on developable Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land within two miles of the Las Vegas city limits. That’s about 9 percent of all land managed by the BLM in the region.

The Solution: Allowing BLM to be able to sell or lease land to local governments and Tribes streamlines the ability to develop housing. Additionally, given the vast amount of federal land and limited transparency around its availability, Congress must take further steps to identify underutilized land suitable for residential development and simplify transfer processes.

The *Utilizing National Land for Opportunities and Community Key (UNLOCK) Housing* would amend the Recreation & Public Purposes Act to include affordable housing as an eligible “public purpose” category, enabling faster land leasing and disposition. Each lease contains a termination clause which provides that, if the land has not been used for the purposes specified in the lease, or is being used for another purpose, the lease will be canceled.

Likewise, the **UNLOCK Housing Act** would codify “Joint Task Force To Use Federal Lands for Affordable Housing” allowing Congress to have better oversight to execute the follow actions:

- Identify underutilized federal lands suitable for residential development.
- Streamline land transfer processes.
- Promote policies that increase the availability of affordable housing.
- Evaluate and quantify the costs incurred by other Federal, State, and local programs due to a lack of affordable housing.
- This task force would be subject to an annual report to Congress.