The 30x30 Disinformation Brigade

How anti-government extremists partnered with big business politicians to undermine American conservation efforts

by Aaron Weiss
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INTRODUCTION

Shortly after taking office, President Joe Biden announced the America the Beautiful initiative—a 10-year effort across government agencies to restore and conserve lands, waters, and wildlife. One of the pillars of America the Beautiful is the “30x30” goal of protecting 30 percent of America’s lands and waters by the end of the decade. 30x30 envisions a combination of national, state, local, and voluntary private conservation efforts to address the interrelated climate and biodiversity crises that threaten the planet.

Soon after 30x30 became an official goal of the Biden administration, a small but extremely vocal group emerged in opposition, led by American Stewards of Liberty (ASL), a far right-wing anti-conservation organization with its roots in the “sagebrush rebellion” of the 1980s and ’90s. In the year that followed, American Stewards organized a loose coalition of opponents that connected anti-government extremist movements with more mainstream politicians who have traditionally worked in the interest of big business donors.

What makes this opposition especially notable is that its tactics are not based on good-faith policy criticism. American Stewards spreads disinformation about the 30x30 goal in an attempt to convince rural counties to pledge not to assist with efforts or accept funding that would protect nature or increase access to public lands in their own backyards. This disinformation campaign is accompanied by dog-whistle racism that suggests only property owners can be trusted to make decisions about public lands that belong to all Americans.

The group is run by Margaret Byfield, whose father, Wayne Hage, was a “proto-Bundy” who illegally grazed his cattle on public lands. Working alongside her are heroes of the land seizure movement and backers of the January 6 insurrection, many of whom are political allies of militia groups like the Oath Keepers and Three Percenters who have strong connections to avowed white nationalists.

This report builds on the Center for Western Priorities’ work tracking connections between the anti-public lands extremists responsible for the 2016 takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and the politicians who connect them to the GOP mainstream.
THE PLAYERS

American Stewards of Liberty

The American Stewards of Liberty (ASL) is a Texas-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the goal of "protecting private property rights, defending the use of our land, and restoring local control."

The group is strongly opposed to the Biden administration's 30x30 executive order and produced a report, "Guide to Fight the 30 x 30 Land Grab," which included a model resolution that it claims has been adopted by 134 localities.

ASL claimed that 30x30 was an "unconstitutional policy shift, moving us from a nation founded on private property principles to one controlled by the administrative state."

Financially, ASL exists primarily as a pass-through for its only employees, Margaret and Daniel Byfield. In 2020, the most recent year for which data is available, the Byfields paid themselves $192,000, accounting for 65 percent of the group's total spending, according to the group's IRS filings. That year, ASL raised $203,000 in revenue, resulting in a $90,000 loss for the non-profit. Each year since 2017, the Byfields' salaries have amounted to more than half of ASL's total expenses.

Margaret Byfield

Anti-government crusader and science denier

Byfield is the executive director of American Stewards of Liberty. She is the daughter of "sagebrush rebel" Wayne Hage, who sued the federal government after his family's cattle were confiscated for grazing illegally on federal lands. The Hages' case against the federal government went on for nearly 20 years.

Byfield's group has opposed the 30x30 initiative aggressively since early 2021, soon after it was announced by the Biden administration. Byfield

Anti-conservation in action: Cherry County, Nebraska

American Stewards of Liberty's war on private property rights is most visible in Cherry County, Nebraska, where the owners of the Bow and Arrow Ranch wanted to put a conservation easement on their land, in partnership with the Nebraska Land Trust. The owners of the ranch wanted to ensure their land would stay in agricultural use, and the easement plan was approved unanimously by the county planning commission in November 2020.

Despite the lack of any local opposition to the easement, County Chair Tanya Storer brought in Texan Margaret Byfield of
has been holding training sessions to teach citizens and officials how to oppose 30x30, which she calls "anti-capitalism," "anti-individual liberty," and "anti-American," and has organized counties and local governments across the American West and Midwest to pass resolutions opposing 30x30. Byfield has repeatedly and falsely claimed that the actual goal of the Biden administration was to control 50 percent of lands and oceans in the United States.

Byfield has denied that the climate and biodiversity crises are real, saying that the 30x30 initiative is being pushed by the "environmental elite" and based on "false science." When Nebraska radio show host Trent Loos claimed that Nazism and Hitler gave rise to the ecology movement, Byfield did not disagree with that sentiment. Byfield also agreed with a comment that compared 30x30 to the Holodomor, a deliberate Stalin-led famine that killed nearly four million Ukrainians.

The "Stop 30x30 Summit" organized by the American Stewards of Liberty, is scheduled for late April 2022, and features Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts, Colorado Rep. Lauren Boebert, conservative commentator Gabriella Hoffman, and former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt. Byfield called the event “the most important conference we have ever organized” and said, "we need every American who sees this agenda as the federal land grab that it is to be there."

American Stewards of Liberty, who gave the board her “professional opinion” about the Endangered Species Act and conservation easements, and warned of “unsavory processes” that could lead to conservation corridors that help endangered species recover.

The following month, Commissioner Storer gave the board “a review of her findings” regarding the conservation easement. Storer’s findings focused on the American Burying Beetle, which had recently been downlisted from Endangered to Threatened at the behest of American Stewards of Liberty and the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

Because the proposed conservation easement at Bow and Arrow Ranch could provide habitat for the beetle’s recovery, Cherry County told the owners of the ranch they could not conserve their land. Despite no opposition from neighbors or the county planning board, the county commission rejected the easement.

Storer went on to trumpet her success stopping the conservation easement alongside Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts at “Stop 30 x30” events across the state in 2021. In 2022, Storer and Ricketts are encouraging the legislature to pass a bill that would ban perpetual conservation easements entirely in Nebraska.
Trent Loos
Conspiracy theorist and Insurrection booster

Trent Loos has hosted his “Loos Tales” radio show since 2001, which airs on over 100 stations nationwide and claims to have three million listeners on-air and online. He also posts a daily video blog called “Loos from the Hip.” In 2017, Loos was appointed to serve on former President Trump’s Agriculture Advisory Committee.

Occupation of Malheur Wildlife Refuge and Hammond pardons

Loos participated in the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in 2016, siding with anti-government extremists Steven and Dwight Hammond, together with the right-wing organization Protect The Harvest. During the occupation, Loos interviewed Ammon Bundy, and suggested that the American people were lucky to “have individuals willing to stand up for what they believe in and hold true like Ammon Bundy and all of his supporters.” Protect The Harvest has staked its claim in opposing animal rights groups and organized a nationwide movement to push for the pardon of convicted arsonist ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond, who inspired the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation. In 2018, President Donald Trump emboldened the “patriot” movement by pardoning the Hammonds, who had been convicted of arson on national public lands.

January 6th and Vladimir Putin

Loos hosted a radio show on January 6, 2021 where he interviewed a correspondent, Tom Blumhorst, on a “Loos Tales Special Report” as rioters marched toward the U.S. Capitol in the background. Loos claimed that insurrectionists were “speaking up for the future of liberty and freedom.” Loos pushed out false claims of election fraud after Donald Trump lost the 2020 election and called Dr. Anthony Fauci a “war criminal.” After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Loos criticized Ukrainian leadership and voiced support for Vladimir Putin during the invasion.

Partnership with American Stewards of Liberty

In 2021, Loos was the tour emcee and speaker for the Arise USA Tour, an anti-government speaking tour that “intended” to hit at least 48 states over a 100 day period. He also joined American Stewards of Liberty’s Margaret Byfield to oppose 30x30 events nationwide, suggesting that the 30x30 effort was “designed to chase you and me off our own property” and co-hosted “Fight 30x30” events in Oklahoma, Montana, and South Dakota with Byfield. Loos claimed to have spoken to audiences in 41 states about “the dangers of ‘conservation’ under the guise of 30x30,” claiming that 30x30 is the beginning of the government’s attempt to “control your food supply.” He has also compared 30x30 to Nazi land use programs. In April of 2021, Loos invited the public to join American Stewards of Liberty by saying, “We can implement all of the endangered species laws we want to, just like Hitler did, but the bald eagle thrives today because of landowners that provide habitat, not government bureaucrats.”
Gabriella Hoffman

*Amplifying disinformation about 30x30*

Gabriella Hoffman is a writer, speaker, and commentator associated with Townhall Media, the Independent Women’s Forum, and the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT). Townhall Media is a conservative web publication that was started and owned by the Heritage Foundation from 1995 to 2005, and is currently owned and operated by Salem Media. The Center for Countering Digital Hate ranked Townhall fourth in its “Toxic Ten” publishers that spread nearly 70 percent of all interactions of climate change denial on Facebook. Hoffman has hosted the “District of Conservation” podcast since 2018 and worked as a media member of the National Shooting Sports Foundation. She is a featured speaker at the April ASL conference. Hoffman defended Donald Trump after his presidency ended and called on Democrats to “look in the mirror” with regards to Russia.

In February 2022, Hoffman wrote an op-ed in the Washington Times falsely claiming that 30x30 would threaten private property rights. Hoffman wrote that the details contained in the “America the Beautiful” report intentionally misled the American public about the current state of protected land in the United States.

Hoffman’s argument was based entirely on false numbers—a repeated claim that 40.6 percent of U.S. land is already protected. But the source that Hoffman uses actually shows that only 13 percent of U.S. land is protected. Neither Hoffman nor the Washington Times had corrected or retracted this false claim as of April 2022.

In January 2022, Hoffman’s “District of Conservation” podcast hosted South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem to discuss 30x30, where Noem said “the 30-30 rule is trying to take more control of land and put it under the federal government’s authority and power.”

State Rep. Ken Ivory

*County supremacy advocate and long-time conservative grifter*

Ken Ivory is a state representative from Utah who served in the statehouse from 2011-2019, returning in 2021 to continue his service. From his early days in the Utah state house, Ivory has been a fierce opponent of public lands.

In 2012, Ivory introduced the “Utah Transfer of Public Lands Act” which passed through the legislature and was signed into law by the governor. The bill demanded that the United States Congress convey 31.2 million acres of public lands to the state of Utah by the end of 2014, despite the state having no plans or funds with which to manage those lands. Since Congress has the exclusive authority to transfer public lands, Ivory and his allies in Utah were unsuccessful, meaning his legislation was merely a messaging bill that failed to do anything except send $600,000 to an out-of-state law firm. Ivory is
scheduled to speak at ASL’s anti-30x30 summit in April 2022.

**Deep ties to extremists**
Ivory is no stranger to controversy and extremism. *Ivory appeared on conspiracy theorist Alex Jones’ show in 2015, where he was described by Jones as a "hero." When Jones said that the "ultimate discrimination" in the United States was against the American West having the same freedoms as the eastern U.S., Ivory said it was a "great point." Also in 2015, Ivory spoke to the patriot group known as the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA). The extremist group contends that local sheriffs hold the ultimate law-enforcement authority in their counties, outranking the federal government. CSPOA’s ideology has gained traction with separatists and the militia movement that decry the federal government.

Cliven Bundy is an ardent supporter of the “sheriff supremacy” movement embodied by CSPOA, even saying that he only recognized local sheriffs as law enforcement during his 2014 standoff. Ivory spoke at the same event as Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes and ‘Sagebrush Sheriffs.’ CSPOA filmed Ivory’s speech and used it as a promotional video. Additionally, the Oath Keepers of Oregon included a link to Ivory’s American Lands Council (see below) on its website alongside other Oath Keeper organizations.

**Profiting off bogus public lands claims**
Ivory used his land transfer legislation as a blueprint to launch the American Lands Council (ALC), a group that he led from 2012 to 2016. Ivory spent his time during those four years traveling across the American West trying unsuccessfully to convince state and local government officials that they could simply claim millions of acres of federal land for themselves and their local jurisdictions.

Government watchdog Anne Weismann, then with the Campaign for Accountability, described Ivory’s contention that counties could demand land from the federal government as a “widely discredited legal theory.” The Salt Lake Tribune reported that Ivory’s efforts with the American Lands Council became an “all-consuming crusade” for him and his wife Rebecca Ivory, who served as the group’s communications director. The American Lands Council recruited individuals, groups, and local governments and charged them membership fees ranging from $1,000 to $25,000 per year to support ALC’s work. Ivory spent over 50 percent of the funds raised to pay himself and his wife in 2013. Over the course of four years, Ivory and his wife were paid more than $430,000 for their roles leading the ALC, but the efforts of the group ended entirely in failure.

When Ivory resigned from the state legislature in 2019, he took a job with Geomancer, an artificial intelligence company that had a $700,000 contract with the state to place a dollar value on national public lands. During his time in the legislature, Ivory wrote the first $25,000 state contract with Geomancer, bringing his grift full circle.

**American Stewards of Liberty takes the ALC playbook**
In 2021, American Stewards of Liberty seized upon this model established by the American Lands Council, traveling across the country recruiting counties to pass legislation refusing to cooperate with the 30x30 program. American Stewards of Liberty Executive Director Margaret Byfield and American Stewards of Liberty CEO Daniel Byfield paid themselves handsomely in the process. In 2020, Margaret and Daniel Byfield paid themselves more than $192,000, nearly two-thirds of ASL’s expenses, according to the group’s IRS filing.
OPENING THE DOOR TO EXTREMISM

The partnership between the land seizure movement and traditional Republican policymakers—culminating with support from President Trump while he was in office—did not happen overnight. Slowly but surely, ideas that were once considered to be alternative and extreme found their way into the heart of the Republican party.

Support for land seizure found a home in the GOP’s 2016 national platform and was advanced in subsequent years by extremist members of Congress. Congresswoman Lauren Boebert, a right-wing Republican from Colorado’s 3rd district, introduced the “30 x 30 Termination Act” in May 2021. If passed, the bill would prohibit the declaration of a national monument in certain areas and would nullify President Biden’s 30x30 executive order. The majority of cosponsors of Boebert’s “30 X 30 Termination Act” objected to certifying the 2020 election results after the January 6 insurrection.

There is significant overlap between the insurrectionists and the land seizure movement. At least 60 representatives who objected to the election certification on January 6, 2021 have also supported land seizure policies or taken stands against federal land management. (See Appendix A.)

A former Oath Keeper speaks out

Jason Van Tatenhove worked for the Oath Keepers as a self-described “propagandist.” He embedded with the group at the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff in Nevada, intending to do immersive journalism in the style of Hunter S. Thompson. But he was soon on the Oath Keepers’ payroll, writing blog posts from the group’s point of view.

After he left the Oath Keepers, the group played a central role in the January 6 Capitol insurrection, and its founder, Stewart Rhodes, was charged with seditious conspiracy.

“I underestimated things,” Van Tatenhove told The Denver Post in early 2022. “I saw how they spun the optics and made themselves look much bigger than they were. I tended to underestimate them because I thought they were never going to pull anything off. They have this scam going and they’ll keep scamming people and, eventually, they’ll run out of suckers to scam. But, man, they stormed the Capitol.”
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert
*Insurrection and QAnon supporter*

Boebert suggested in 2020 that she “was the militia” and had militia members provide safety for campaign events. Boebert has posted a video with a Three Percenter named Robert Gieswein, who gifted her a gun in her restaurant in 2020. Gieswein was charged with storming the U.S. Capitol building on January 6 and attacking police officers. Rep. Steve Cohen claimed that he saw Boebert giving a tour to a large group of people prior to the January 6 insurrection and suggested that they may have been involved in the riot. Boebert referred to January 6 as Republicans’ “1776 moment.”

In 2020, Boebert appeared on a podcast hosted by a QAnon believer, where she said that she was “very familiar” with the conspiracy theory. Boebert went on to say that if QAnon was real, then it would be “really great for our country.” Boebert said, “everything that I have heard about Q, I hope that it is real because it only means America is getting stronger and better and people are returning to conservative values.”

In addition to introducing the “30 x 30 Termination Act” in the House, Boebert is scheduled to speak at ASL’s anti-30x30 summit in

Congressman Paul Gosar
*White nationalist ally and conspiracy theorist*

Congressman Paul Gosar has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2011 and currently represents Arizona’s fourth congressional district. In 2021, Gosar was removed from his committees and censured by the House for posting an animated video depicting the execution of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

**Legitimizing county supremacy**

In 2017, Congressman Gosar worked with American Stewards of Liberty to get former President Trump to sign a state and local public lands coordination executive order as chair of the Congressional Western Caucus. Gosar claimed that the draft order, a priority of the American Stewards of Liberty, would have led to local voices “not being ignored any longer.” The order would have required the Interior Department and Forest Service to defer to county officials when writing management plans for national public lands.

**Amplifying disinformation on 30x30**

Gosar cosponsored Boebert’s “30 x 30 Termination Act” in May 2021 and falsely claimed that the Biden administration owned “a majority of all land already” and were “seeking to take even more” through 30x30. Gosar claimed without evidence that the Biden administration’s goal in 30x30 was to “stop energy and mining in our country” and “to weaken our nation.” Gosar issued a newsletter in May 2021 that included images...
taken from the American Stewards of Liberty website.

**White nationalist ally**

Gosar has a long-documented history with extremist ideologies; he claimed that the 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia was a George Soros-funded false flag operation and went on to say that Soros was a Nazi collaborator during World War II. In 2021, Gosar was named as one of the members of Congress who communicated with “Stop The Steal” organizers prior to the January 6 insurrection. Gosar reportedly told organizers of the insurrection that they would get a blanket pardon from Trump if they carried out the insurrection and was referred to as “captain” by “Stop The Steal” leader Ali Alexander. Gosar has decried the treatment of insurrectionists, accusing the “national security state” of unleashing itself against “Trump voters.” Gosar spoke at the America First Political Action Conference in 2022 and 2021, which was organized by white nationalist Nick Fuentes. In 2021, he traveled with white nationalists to the U.S.-Mexico border.
The desire to cater to an increasingly radicalized Republican base has moved traditionally mainstream elected officials and members of the party’s leadership to reframe their position on environmental policy issues in a way that both provides their base with the anti-government red meat that they crave, while also promoting their long-standing goals of exploiting public land for mining, logging, and drilling in order to benefit corporate donors.

**Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts**

The political hub of 30x30 disinformation

Governor Ricketts has held town halls in at least nine Nebraska cities to “raise awareness about the threat 30x30 poses to our way of life here in Nebraska.” In April 2021, Ricketts organized a letter from 14 governors warning that 30x30 would “violate property rights” and accused the Biden administration of acting outside of its constitutional and statutory authority. Ricketts has said that the fight over public lands management is “now in our own backyard” and “we are on the front lines.”

Ricketts became the first governor to issue an executive order opposing the 30x30 initiative, signing EO 21-08, “Stop 30x30 - Protect Our Land and Water,” in June 2021. The order directed Nebraska state agencies to “prevent the implementation” of the Biden administration’s 30x30 initiative. American Stewards of Liberty heaped praise on Ricketts after the order, with Executive Director Margaret Byfield saying “Governor Ricketts has been an active leader” in opposing 30x30. In April 2022, Ricketts will host the American Stewards of Liberty’s “Stop 30x30 Summit” in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**January 6th insurrection**

When asked for his thoughts on the January 6th insurrection, Ricketts said that a lot of “middle class folks” were unhappy about policies that didn’t put “America first.” Ricketts gave credence to false claims of voter fraud in the 2020 election by supporting a commission to investigate false claims of fraud. Ricketts said, “it would be good for Congress” to “make sure that in future elections, people can have confidence.” Ricketts conflated the January 6 insurrection with racial justice protests in the summer of 2020 and offered no comment when asked if January 6 represented “legitimate political discourse.”

**Poisoned towns and climate denial**

Ricketts oversaw one of the country’s worst urban environmental disasters emerge under his watch as the AltEn ethanol plant in Mead, Nebraska poisoned wildlife and affected human health, including causing nosebleeds and throat and eye irritation. The plant opened under Ricketts, and his administration failed to get the plant managers to clean up the affected area. In 2020, Ricketts blamed rolling blackouts on renewable energy, using the state’s hardship to hammer “radical environmentalists” despite the fact that Nebraska was under his leadership.
Ricketts has questioned the validity of climate change throughout his political career. During Ricketts’ 2014 campaign, he said that he was “skeptical” of the science showing that humans contribute to climate change. Despite decades of overwhelming evidence and a global scientific consensus that humans are causing global climate change, in 2019, Ricketts said it was “far from clear what is going on with our climate” and in 2020, he said that “the climate is always changing” when asked directly about his stance on climate change.

A reliable friend of the establishment
Fossil fuel interests provided hundreds of thousands in direct campaign contributions to fund Ricketts’ campaigns. Ricketts has taken at least $25,000 from Koch industries during his career, and the Nebraska Petroleum PAC has been a consistent contributor, giving at least $7,600 to Ricketts from 2018-2020. Ricketts has taken over $140,000 from the oil and gas industry during his career. The Ricketts family donated $5.5 million to a super PAC devoted to stopping Trump from winning the Republican nomination for president in 2015, but when he became the nominee, Ricketts attended a rally in Omaha where he expressed his support for Trump.

Former Secretary of the Interior
David Bernhardt

Now leading at Trump-allied think tank
David Bernhardt served as the Secretary of the Interior under former President Donald Trump from 2019-2021. Before that, he served as the Deputy Secretary of the Interior from 2017-2019. Bernhardt served in the Department of the Interior for the entirety of the George W. Bush administration as well, working his way up from Counselor to Interior Solicitor at the end of the Bush administration.

When not inside the government, Bernhardt has worked at law and lobbying firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as an attorney. Bernhardt worked for Brownstein Hyatt from 1998-2001; from 2009-2017; and rejoined the firm in 2021. Bernhardt currently serves as Chair of the Center for American Freedom at the Trump-focused “America First Policy Institute” and on the Advisory Board for Mike Pence’s “Advancing American Freedom.”

Bernhardt is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the American Stewards of Liberty’s anti-30x30 Summit in April 2022.

Criticism of the “administrative state” and increasing involvement in culture wars
Bernhardt has criticized the Biden administration for “stifling domestic energy production” and increasing costs on American consumers. Bernhardt criticized the “administrative state” which he has repeatedly accused of causing higher gas prices and blamed a “lengthy permitting process” for being a “serious drag on the nation’s economy.”

Bernhardt joined the pro-Trump America First Policy Institute (AFPI) shortly after leaving office. As part of his role leading the
“Center for American Freedom” under AFPI’s banner, Bernhardt in 2021 accused the Biden administration of "discriminating“ against white Americans during the distribution of COVID relief funds and decried “an increasingly intolerant ‘cancel culture’“ that "seeks to punish disagreement." Bernhardt also criticized so-called “critical race theory” and “wokeness” in a column for AFPI.

**Weakened public lands protections**
As Interior Secretary, David Bernhardt worked to weaken public lands and wildlife protections. In October 2020, Bernhardt led the way to open up more than half of Alaska’s Tongass National Forest to logging and other development, saying that the oil and gas leasing in the forest would mark “a new chapter in American energy independence.” In August 2020, he announced plans for an oil and gas leasing program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, saying that future leases would make the entire refuge available for drilling. In May 2020, Bernhardt announced plans to expand drilling in New Mexico’s greater Chaco region despite protests from surrounding communities, and in January 2020, he weakened policies around the bedrock National Environmental Policy Act so that agencies could no longer consider climate change as they weighed impacts of federal projects. In August 2019, Bernhardt weakened implementation of the Endangered Species Act to make it easier to drill where protected species live.

**Delivering for industry**
In May 2019, Bernhardt delivered on a major American Petroleum Institute priority by rolling back the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a major offshore-drilling safety regulation that was put in place after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Bernhardt represented the Independent Petroleum Association of America while working at Brownstein Hyatt, and after the group lobbied to weaken the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bernhardt gutted it shortly after taking the reins as Interior Secretary in April 2019.
Senator Kevin Cramer
"Big lie" supporter backs anti-30x30 bill in Senate

Kevin Cramer has represented North Dakota in the United States Senate since 2019. Prior to his election to the Senate, Cramer was North Dakota’s at-large member in the House of Representatives.

In May 2021, Sen. Cramer introduced the “30 x 30 Termination Act” in the U.S. Senate. The bill was a companion to Rep. Lauren Boebert’s legislation of the same name that was introduced eleven days prior in the House of Representatives. Cramer claimed that the Biden administration was “paving the way for another attempted land grab” through the 30x30 initiative, and falsely claimed that it could “threaten people’s private property rights and local control over land.” American Stewards of Liberty and Protect the Harvest, two far-right anti-public lands groups, praised Cramer for introducing the legislation.

Cramer is scheduled to be a keynote speaker at the American Stewards of Liberty’s “Stop 30x30 Summit” in Nebraska in April 2022.

January 6th

While Cramer voted to certify the results of the 2020 presidential election, he has echoed the falsehoods of the “big lie” that Donald Trump actually won the 2020 election. Over a month after the election, Cramer went to great lengths to avoid calling Joe Biden the “president-elect.” Two days before the January 6 insurrection, Cramer claimed that objecting to Electoral College votes was “not unprecedented” and falsely claimed that “vote-by-mail, ballot harvesting, and ballot curing” could have changed the outcome of the election. Cramer currently has a section on his website that outlines all of the challenges to the 2020 presidential election. Cramer opposed creating a commission to investigate the January 6 insurrection and dismissed Trump’s continued lies about the insurrection as a “low priority” for him.

Anti-public lands, climate denier, Trump energy advisor

Cramer has an extreme anti-public lands and anti-environment agenda. In 2021, Cramer sponsored the “Federal Land Freedom Act” to give states full control over public lands that they do not own in order to develop all of the energy resources within their borders. In 2017, Cramer cosponsored at least nine anti-parks bills during the first ten months of Trump’s presidency. Cramer served as Trump’s energy advisor during his 2016 campaign, where Cramer argued that Trump should spend his first 100 days in office rolling back “a number of energy-sector regulations.” Cramer wrote a briefing for Trump focused on a “variety of government regulations that Mr. Trump would want to do away with” if he won the presidency.

Cramer also sponsored H.R. 767 in 2014 to open up the Bakken Shale Basin in North Dakota to fracking and in 2012 took the Americans for Prosperity pledge that he would oppose “any legislation” relating to climate change. Cramer, in 2016, defined himself as a “climate skeptic,” but he had taken a much harder stance, denying the existence of climate change previously. In 2012, Cramer called human-caused climate change “fraudulent science” and contended that “we know the globe is cooling.” Cramer said, “the idea
that CO₂ is somehow causing global warming is on its face fraudulent.”

**Fossil fuel money**
Cramer has taken a significant amount of money from fossil fuel interests during his career, including over $1.2 million from the oil and gas industry. Cramer’s total donations from the oil and gas industry make him the eleventh-highest total recipient of oil and gas money in the entire U.S. Senate. This includes receiving nearly $100,000 in donations from Energy Transfer LP alone. He has also taken nearly $90,000 from Select Energy Services, over $80,000 from Oasis Petroleum, and a combined $65,000 from Marathon Oil and Devon Energy.

Cramer’s 2018 Senate campaign was bankrolled and supported by billionaire energy executive and fracking pioneer Harold Hamm, the founder and CEO of Continental Resources. Hamm encouraged Cramer to run and donated at least $60,400 to his campaign through a $50,000 donation to the Cramer Victory Fund, a $5,000 donation through Hamm’s company’s PAC, and a maximum $5,400 personal donation to Cramer’s campaign.

Hamm served as an advisor to Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign and was a leading nominee to become Secretary of Energy. In 2011, Hamm falsely claimed that opening public lands for oil and gas drilling would wipe out the national debt. In 2014, Hamm worked with then-Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to sue the Interior Department for adding species like the sage-grouse and lesser prairie chicken to the endangered species list, which Hamm and Pruitt saw as a threat to oil and gas leasing. In 2016, Hamm likened environmental regulations to terrorism during a speech at the Republican National Convention, saying, “Every time we can’t drill a well in America, terrorism is being funded.” In March 2022, Hamm called on President Biden to “open federal lands for energy development” after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**Delivering for industry**
Cramer has delivered for industry, claiming victory in 2020 when oil prices rose after crashing at the start of the pandemic. The Washington Examiner reported that “Cramer is claiming victory, with oil prices stabilizing in recent weeks at about $30-per-barrel from a low of below zero.” In 2022, Cramer was praised by the North Dakota Petroleum Council for pushing to increase domestic drilling amidst the Russian invasion of Ukraine. When Cramer introduced the “Federal Land Freedom Act” to give states the ability to drill on federal lands within their borders, the North Dakota Petroleum Council applauded the move and Cramer highlighted its support in a press release. During negotiations of the Build Back Better Act in 2021, Cramer wrote a letter urging Democrats to oppose a methane emissions tax. His letter was praised on social media by The American Exploration & Production Council and Independent Petroleum Association of America.
THE MONEY

Funding for the groups on the front lines of the anti-30x30 movement is relatively limited, and like American Stewards of Liberty, they spend a significant portion of their revenues on administrative expenses and salaries. The true financial support for public policy designed to keep public land out of the hands of Americans and under industry control comes from trade associations and corporate stakeholders like the Western Energy Alliance (WEA) and the American Petroleum Institute (API). The Koch-funded Americans For Prosperity invests tens of millions of dollars in federal campaigns that oppose conservation and climate action, while funding groups like 'Stand Together' that focus their efforts on defeating voting rights legislation.

These groups parrot the arguments used by American Stewards of Liberty and other third party groups, including the false claim that America does not need 30x30 because more than 30 percent of American lands are already under protection.

In the 2020 election cycle, the American Petroleum Institute spent over $5.2 million in federal elections, while Americans for Prosperity spent nearly $48 million during the 2020 cycle. In the 2020 election cycle, the Western Energy Alliance, the American Petroleum Institute, and Americans for Prosperity donated over $4 million in campaign contributions and to third party groups committed to undermining public lands protections and attempts to stop the Biden administration’s 30x30 initiative.

Utah Representative Ken Ivory, who started the American Lands Council (which received money from Americans for Prosperity), has led a campaign to take back public lands and use the areas to help enrich industry through logging, mining, and grazing on the lands.

Western Energy Alliance

The Western Energy Alliance, an industry group representing oil and gas companies that operate on public lands, has claimed without evidence that the 30x30 initiative is “the first step of the larger goal of eliminating oil and natural gas first on federal lands, and then, completely.”

WEA President Kathleen Sgamma also repeated false claims made by CFACT’s Gabriella Hoffman and American Stewards of Liberty that over 30 percent of American land is already under protection. Hoffman wrote an op-ed misstating U.S. Geological Survey data that actually shows about 13 percent of American land is under protection. American Stewards of Liberty made the false claim in the group’s “guide to fight 30x30,” which used the inflated number to argue that 30x30 was not necessary.
American Petroleum Institute

The American Petroleum Institute paradoxically claimed that the 30x30 initiative would "undercut" land conservation projects like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) because the oil and gas industry partially provides funding for the fund.

American Stewards of Liberty has argued that the LWCF was being weaponized by the Biden administration to "aggressively pursue" land acquisition projects, despite the fact that buying land from willing sellers is the core purpose of LWCF and is written into the statute that created the fund.

API President Mike Sommers claimed in January 2021 that curtailing oil and gas leasing would cause "working people and consumers" to suffer, including teacher layoffs and increased school class sizes. Recently, API has used the Russian invasion of Ukraine to call for increased drilling on federal lands and waters.

Big oil funds anti-30x30 politicians

Twenty eight Republican members of Congress co-sponsored the “30x30 Termination Act,” and those members have taken over $4 million in their career from the oil and gas industry. Senator Kevin Cramer and Senator Roger Marshall, who introduced the “30x30 Termination Act” in the U.S. Senate, have taken over $1.4 million combined from the oil and gas industry, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. (See Appendix B.)

Americans for Prosperity

Americans for Prosperity (AFP), a group founded by David and Charles Koch in 2003, spent nearly $48 million on federal elections in 2020. The organization is funded primarily by the Koch family. Koch Industries was the largest funder of AFP in the 2020 election cycle, sending $8 million to AFP, while the Koch-backed Freedom Partners Action Fund donated nearly $6.5 million to AFP. Wayne Laufer, co-Founder and retired CEO of Bois d’Arc Energy in Houston, donated $1.2 million to AFP in the 2020 election cycle as well. Shell has donated to the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, AFP’s 501(c)(3) organization. Shell has been
vocal about its desire to continue extraction from new leases on federal lands. In February 2021, Shell CEO Ben Van Beurden questioned the Biden administration’s decision to pause oil and gas leasing in federal waters, arguing that the oil would be produced elsewhere and with more emissions associated with extraction. In November 2021, a Shell spokesperson argued that the “need absolutely continues” for leasing in the Gulf of Mexico, and in March 2022, a Shell Vice President argued that “we need to continue to drill wells, we need to continue to acquire seismic data, and we need to continue to acquire leases.

The Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow

President Craig Rucker and Gabriella Hoffman are representing the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT) at American Stewards of Liberty’s “Stop 30 x 30 Summit” in April 2022. After President Biden took office, CFACT took a strong anti-30x30 stance. In July 2021, the group posted an article calling 30x30 a “land grab” and argued the program was “one of the gravest threats facing ordinary Americans.” The group went on to call 30x30 the “biggest land grab in American history” and falsely claimed that the U.S. government was going to “buy up” “millions of acres of private land” to meet the 30x30 goal. The CFACT podcast “District Of Conservation” host Gabriella Hoffman interviewed American Stewards of Liberty Executive Director Margaret Byfield, who said on the podcast that her group has organized “over 120 counties across the nation that have filed resolutions to oppose 30 by 30.”

CFACT has lost money for two of the past five years, but reported revenues of over $200,000 for both 2019 and 2020. In 2020, CFACT reported its lowest program ratio in at least a decade, spending only 52 percent of the organization’s expenses on programs. Over the past five years, CFACT has spent an average of 8.4 percent of its expenses on administrative costs, while increasing its fundraising ratio from 24.5 percent in 2016 to 40 percent of expenses in 2020, according to the group’s IRS filings. CFACT pays President Craig Rucker and Communications Director Marc Morano significantly, totaling over $1.8 million in the last five years. Morano, who runs a climate denial website hosted by CFACT called “Climate Depot,” has made over $1 million in the last five years alone.

Morano was a vocal supporter of the insurrectionists on January 6, 2021. Morano tweeted, “striking fear in politicians is not a bad thing” on the morning of January 6 and said that he failed to muster “outrage” at the insurrectionists. Morano said that after January 6, “what’s needed next is mass protests to storm state capitols and the CDC.” Two days after the insurrection, Morano retweeted OAN personality Christina Bobb who falsely claimed that the January 6 rioters were affiliated with the Black Lives Matter and Antifa movements.

CFACT has been funded through fossil fuel interests and oil and gas money over the past twenty years. According to The Foundation Center, CFACT has taken $50,000 from the
Charles Koch Foundation and Charles Koch Institute since 2014. The ExxonMobil Foundation was the second-largest grantor in the last twenty years for CFACK, having donated a total of $357,000 to the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow from 2003 to 2006. The Sarah Scaife Foundation, which was created by right-wing billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife, whose wealth was inherited from an industrial, oil, aluminum, and banking fortune, has given CFACK $1.7 million over the past 20 years.

**Protect the Harvest**

Protect The Harvest was founded in 2011 by oil tycoon Forrest Lucas, the founder of Lucas Oil. Protect the Harvest is listed as a sponsor of American Stewards of Liberty’s “Stop 30x30 Summit” in April 2022.

The group gained a loyal following among ranchers, farmers, and cowboys that hold “extreme and vocal anti-government views,” according to The Washington Post. The group gained notoriety for its strong support of anti-government extremists during the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, where Trent Loos hosted a show with Ammon Bundy on site. Forrest Lucas was a close friend and supporter of Steven and Dwight Hammond and helped secure their pardon by President Trump in 2018.

Over the past five years, Protect the Harvest has reported revenues ranging from just over $200,000 to well over $600,000. Protect the Harvest reported modest profits from 2016-2019, but in 2020 posted a loss of nearly $200,000. In 2020, Protect the Harvest’s total revenue decreased by more than half compared to 2019, according to the organization’s IRS filings. Most of the funding for Protect the Harvest comes from Lucas himself; he has invested over $600,000 in Protect the Harvest from 2011 to 2017.
THE DISINFORMATION STRATEGY

Extremist movements traditionally use newsletters and online forums to reach their followers, and the movement opposing protection of national public lands is no different. In addition, anti-government extremists have consistently and effectively capitalized on livestreaming during conflict. NPR reported that few news outlets cover the niche, extreme conflicts that far-right groups capitalize on to cater to their fringe, but growing, followings.

In 2016, Trent Loos live streamed a video interview with Ammon Bundy at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge from Protect The Harvest’s platform. Loos also live streamed a video on his Facebook page during the January 6 insurrection, interviewing a correspondent on the ground as rioters marched toward the U.S. Capitol. Shawna Cox, one of the anti-government extremists who took over the Malheur refuge in 2016, told NPR that live streaming via social media is a powerful recruitment tool because "one person" will share it and "Facebook goes ballistic."

Co-opting counties

American Stewards of Liberty is very aware that its position is on the far fringe of American public opinion. In March 2022, ASL emailed its supporters to inform them that "Four out of five voters in the U.S. support Biden’s 30 x 30 Plan"—a remarkable moment of honesty from a group that generally relies on misrepresenting statistics. ASL correctly cited polling from Colorado College and Natural Resources Defense Council that found 77% of Westerners and 80% of voters nationwide support the 30x30 goal. The email went on to say that "we all know that this plan is not about conservation. It is about the destruction of our nation, and it is only the first step in their agenda."

ASL’s plea to ignore this widespread support was stunningly anti-democratic and racist: it argued that "only 1 in 4 Americans own land," therefore "the majority of people supporting 30x30 do not own land."

It is outside the scope of this report to recount America’s history of limiting electoral participation to white men who owned property, even after black men and later, women, were enfranchised, to say nothing of the decades of racial red-lining that prevented people of color from owning land. It will suffice to say that American Stewards of Liberty is making an explicit call to disregard millions of Americans simply because they are not privileged enough to own property.

This dog whistle to white landowners is especially notable in the context of the America the Beautiful initiative, which puts environmental justice, equity, and access for historically marginalized communities at the center of the Biden administration’s conservation goals.

Broad support for 30x30 has remained strong despite Byfield’s attempts over the last year to convince counties and local governments to draft resolutions opposing the 30x30 initiative. American Stewards of Liberty has held events in at least 30 different counties over 37 events across the West during the past ten months. While speaking to the San Juan County, New Mexico Board of Commissioners on March 1, 2022, Byfield admitted that the push for recruiting
counties to pass anti-30x30 resolutions was a direct response to the League of Conservation Voters, which gathered 450 local elected officials in support of 30x30 in January 2021. Byfield told San Juan County, “the reason why the resolutions are important is because the League Of Conservation Voters early on was circulating a letter through Congress signed by 450 elected local officials.” Byfield continued, “that’s one of the reasons that we ask counties to pass the resolution opposing 30 by 30 is to send that message that, no, this is not locally supported.”

Money in, money out
Part of American Stewards of Liberty’s “program services” funding comes from counties themselves. Counties typically pay ASL $1,500 for “training” on Federal-state coordination, but some counties contract for additional consulting services. The Salt Lake Tribune reported that over a period of six years, from 2014 to 2019, Kane County, Utah paid American Stewards of Liberty nearly $500,000 for consulting services. According to the Utah State Auditor, the county’s highest payment came in 2016, when Kane paid over $270,000 for American Stewards of Liberty’s services. During that time, ASL assisted Kane County officials to persuade Dixie National Forest to revise its travel plan to allow for greater motorized access and in February 2019, Margaret Byfield presented to the county on coordination.

Over a six-year period from 2016 to 2021, Chaves County, New Mexico paid American Stewards of Liberty a total of $185,000 for consulting services. According to the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, which obtained Chaves County records through a public records request, Byfield wrote to Chaves County Manager Bill Williams days after President Biden’s inauguration to consider a resolution opposing 30x30. Byfield

ASL’S anti-30x30 resolution templates
American Stewards of Liberty provides template resolutions for individuals, groups, or organizations opposing 30x30. ASL provides two different draft resolutions that are meant to be passed by local government bodies: one for counties with significant areas of federal land ownership, and another for counties where land is primarily privately owned. Each resolution provides “language for opposing the 30x30 agenda” and is almost entirely complete, with the local government body just having to fill in a few blanks.

ASL outlines a five-step process, including a detailed explanation of how to urge local government entities to pass the resolution. ASL’s step-by-step process also included mailing or emailing a copy of the resolution to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, including the DOI’s mailing address on the resolution template. Byfield and ASL have created the easiest possible path for counties to pass anti-30x30 resolutions, laying out precise steps and pre-written language to allow local government bodies to pass the resolutions with almost no effort or education.

As of April 2022, American Stewards of Liberty listed 134 local government entities that have passed a resolution opposing 30x30. The state of Nebraska alone accounts for nearly half (64 of 134) of the resolutions passed. Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts was the first governor to issue an executive order opposing 30x30 in June 2021.

Several top oil and gas producing counties were among the 134 local entities that passed 30x30 resolutions. McKenzie County, North
followed up in February 2021, and the county passed a resolution opposing 30x30 on May 20, 2021. In March 2022, Otero County, New Mexico entered into a contract with American Stewards of Liberty worth $20,000 per year for consulting services. Otero contracted ASL to deal "with federal agencies regarding issues involving endangered species and federal land use planning."

**By the book**

The main resource used by the American Stewards of Liberty in its efforts to recruit counties to pass anti-30x30 resolutions is the organization’s "Guide to Fight the 30x30 Land Grab." The guide begins by claiming, the "30 x 30 program is an international agenda advanced by radical environmental activists to permanently protect 30 percent of the world’s lands and oceans in their natural state by 2030." And, as with the presentation, the guide falsely claims that private lands are a "major target" of 30x30. The Biden administration has gone out of its way to emphasize that voluntary private conservation efforts are the bedrock of 30x30, alongside national, state, and local lands.

ASL’s guide includes key talking points about 30x30, a guide to answering "tough questions," a timeline of the opposition to 30x30, a map of the counties and governors opposed to 30x30, Congressional cosponsors of The 30 x 30 Termination Act, and an invitation to the "Stop 30x30 Summit" in Lincoln, Nebraska in April 2022. The guide pushes the reader to "protect your community" by "educating local leaders" on 30x30 using ASL’s materials and repeatedly asks the reader to urge local officials to adopt an anti-30x30 resolution. Unfortunately, many of the claims that ASL is using to "educate" the local leaders are false, misleading, or speculative fear-mongering.

Dakota, the top oil-producing county in the United States, passed a resolution opposing 30x30. Lea County, New Mexico, the third-highest oil producing county in the U.S., passed a resolution opposing 30x30 and is featured on the ASL website. Garfield County, Colorado, which is the 16th-highest natural gas producing county in the U.S., was the first county to pass a resolution opposing 30x30 in February 2021. Hitchcock County, Nebraska passed a resolution opposing 30x30 and has led the state in crude oil production since 2011. Hitchcock produced over 570,000 barrels of oil in 2020 alone. Dundy County, Nebraska, which also passed a resolution opposing 30x30, was the second-leading oil producer in Nebraska. Dundy produced over 230,000 barrels of oil in 2020. The data make clear that counties with significant oil and gas investments were on the front lines of passing ASL’s anti-30x30 resolutions.

American Stewards of Liberty prompts each county to “insert active industries in your area” as examples of how industry can benefit from opposing 30x30. The first example that American Stewards of Liberty uses in its draft resolution template is the “forest products industry.” ASL’s resolution goes on to call the forest products industry on federal lands one of the industries that counties’ citizens and businesses “depend on.” Since the Sagebrush Rebellion in the 1970s and 1980s, in which Margaret Byfield’s father rose to prominence, logging, mining, and development interests have “been angry” over environmental protections on national public lands. These resolutions and the opposition to 30x30 carry on that legacy of advocating for federal lands to be exploited for industry’s gain.
Lies, speculation, and half-truths

Private land

Byfield and the American Stewards of Liberty have put these county resolutions at the forefront of the organization’s anti-30X30 strategy. Byfield’s presentations to counties throughout the West are filled with half-truths, speculations, and blatant lies. Byfield falsely claims during her presentation that “private lands are a huge target” of the 30X30 initiative. The presentation even includes an entire slide dedicated to the lie that private land was a target of 30X30. In reality, Vox reported that “nowhere does the report indicate that private lands will be seized by the government.” U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack confirmed that 30X30 is intended to protect “private, working lands” through voluntary programs.

Conspiracies of the “real” goals of 30X30

Byfield speculated during her presentation to the San Juan County Board of Commissioners that 30X30 was “just the beginning” of the Biden administration’s agenda. Byfield claimed without evidence that the “ultimate goal” of 30X30 was to “eliminate the use of the land.” Sen. Roger Marshall, the sponsor of the Senate’s “30X30 Termination Act” claimed that “radical environmentalists” were using 30X30 and climate change as a “guise to lobby an aggressive change to American agricultural practices.”

In reality, the Interior Department has held numerous public listening sessions and opened a formal comment period to hear from farmers, ranchers, fishermen, conservation groups, and others as it plans for the upcoming American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas, which will track progress towards 30X30. Groups that advocate for the 30X30 goal, including the Center for Western Priorities, have highlighted the role that private conservation, including ranching, must play in reaching 30X30.

Conservation easement disinformation

Byfield has argued that conservation easements essentially strip property owners of their rights, falsely saying that the landowner essentially sells all control of their property. American Stewards of Liberty’s “Guide to Fight 30X30” includes a warning that conservation easements would mean landowners would no longer “have functional control of the property.” ASL claims that conservation easements mean a landowner is “selling more than just the development rights.” Byfield and ASL falsely claim that landowners are tricked through conservation easements and are not informed that easements are permanent. In truth, conservation easements are completely voluntary and represent decisions made by individual landowners or groups of landowners for a multitude of reasons.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, explains that agricultural easements “protect the long-term viability of the nation’s food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses,” while simultaneously boosting “environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat and protection of open space.” Groups such as the Land Conservation Assistance Network have numerous resources to help landowners craft easements that fit the individual needs of each land owner.

Climate denial

ASL’s “Guide to Fight 30X30” falsely claims that there is “no credible scientific reasoning or facts” that 30X30 would help to address climate change. ASL argued that “if restricting land solves climate change and prevents species from going extinct,”
then “we should not be in a climate crisis today,” denying the universal scientific consensus of anthropogenic climate change. The guide goes on to claim that the Biden administration’s “politically motivated climate crisis agenda” was being used to “gain control of Americans’ land.”

In reality, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that 30x30 was indeed a “crucial tool” in combating the climate crisis, and while the March 2022 biodiversity negotiations in Geneva failed to reach a full agreement, the 30x30 goal emerged as an area of global consensus. Additionally, a 2019 study published in *Science* showed that protecting natural lands was “the cheapest and fastest alternative for addressing climate change” and that biologically diverse landscapes are some of the most important carbon sinks.

**Socialism**

ASL has used the threat of socialism throughout its materials. The day that President Biden took office, ASL warned that “liberals have been eroding our property rights for environmental causes, indoctrinating our children with socialist ideas” and “now the socialists are in charge.” After President Biden signed the executive order establishing the 30x30 goal, ASL claimed, “the policy is unconstitutional because the President has replaced the priorities and policies lawfully established by Congress with those of progressive socialists under the declared emergency of ‘climate crisis.’”

American Stewards of Liberty’s “Guide to Fight 30x30” claimed that the 30x30 initiative is an attempt by the federal government to “convert land use from being based on private property rights, to a socialistic system.” In a March 2021 speech in Valentine, Nebraska, ASL Executive Director Margaret Byfield claimed that 30x30 is really about socialism, and that the organization is really fighting against socialism’s threat to America.

Ironically, Nebraska is the only state in the nation in which county commissioners have the authority to deny private landowners the right to conserve their own land with conservation easements, giving county land use plans supremacy over the private property rights of farmers. This government paternalism, which ASL supports, effectively forces families to either continue farming or to sell their land if farming is not economically feasible.
CONCLUSION

The organized opposition to 30x30 is not based on good-faith policy disagreements about how to address the climate crisis or best manage America’s public lands. It comes from a political fringe that denies the universal scientific consensus on climate change and the biodiversity crisis threatening America and the earth. American Stewards of Liberty and its allies are simply opposed to all forms of conservation, public and private.

Margaret Byfield and her 30x30 disinformation brigade know that an overwhelming majority of Americans support protecting more lands, and support the right of private landowners to protect their farms and ranches for future generations. Without facts or public opinion on their side, all they have left is lies and half-truths.

Anti-conservation industries like oil and gas companies know they can’t take a public stand against a future that is both popular and scientifically necessary, so they have dispatched mainstream politicians and operatives like David Bernhardt and Pete Ricketts to join forces with the extremists who tried to overthrow the government on January 6. With one ‘big lie’ already part of the extremist narrative, they’ve found it easy to add another lie by willfully misrepresenting the 30x30 goal, the science behind it, and how it can be achieved.
# APPENDIX A: MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT OBJECTED TO THE 2020 ELECTION & SUPPORTED LAND SEIZURE POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member of Congress</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>State(s) Objected</th>
<th>Anti-Land Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Carl</td>
<td>AL-1</td>
<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
<td>HR 3014, 30 X 30 Termination Act Cosponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Crawford</td>
<td>AR-1</td>
<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
<td>HR 3014, 30 X 30 Termination Act Cosponsor; HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Paul Gosar</td>
<td>AZ-4</td>
<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
<td>HR 3014, 30 X 30 Termination Act Cosponsor; HR 4797, Prevent National Monument Designations Without Congressional Approval Cosponsor; Voted For HR 5, Easing Federal Land Transfer; HR 4934, Defang BLM Law Enforcement Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Andy Biggs</td>
<td>AZ-5</td>
<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
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<td>David Schweikert</td>
<td>AZ-6</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Voted For HR 5, Easing Federal Land Transfer; HR 3946, Requiring DOI To Receive Local &amp; State Approval For National Monument Designations Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Debbie Lesko</td>
<td>AZ-8</td>
<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
<td>Voted against HR 1373, Protecting 1 Million Acres Around Grand Canyon National Park</td>
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<td>Doug LaMalfa</td>
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<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
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<td>Kevin McCarthy</td>
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<td>Supported Trump Administration's National Monument Review; Voted For HR 5, Easing Federal Land Transfer</td>
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<td>Ken Calvert</td>
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<td>State(s) Objected</td>
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<td>Steve Scalise</td>
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<td>Sam Graves</td>
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<td>Jason Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Rosendale</td>
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<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Virginia Foxx</td>
<td>NC-5</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor; HR 4934, Defang BLM Law Enforcement Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Adrian Smith</td>
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<td>Jefferson Van Drew</td>
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<td>Yvette Herrell</td>
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<td>Kevin Hern</td>
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<td>State(s) Objected</td>
<td>Anti-Land Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cliff Bentz</td>
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<td>Scott Perry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Keller</td>
<td>PA-12</td>
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<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guy Reschenthaler</td>
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<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
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<td>Glenn Thompson</td>
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<td>Jeff Duncan</td>
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<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor</td>
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<td>William Timmons</td>
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<td>Tom Rice</td>
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<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
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<td>David Kustoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louie Gohmert</td>
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<td>Pete Sessions</td>
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<td>Brian Babin</td>
<td>TX-36</td>
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<td>Chris Stewart</td>
<td>UT-2</td>
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<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor; Voted For HR 5, Easing Federal Land Transfer; HR 3946, Requiring DOI To Receive Local &amp; State Approval For National Monument Designations Cosponsor; HR 4934, Defang BLM Law Enforcement Sponsor; Launched Group To Find Legislative Framework For Land Transfer</td>
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<td>Bob Good</td>
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<td>Morgan Griffith</td>
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<td>AZ &amp; PA</td>
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<td>Alex Mooney</td>
<td>WV-2</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>HR 543, Prevent President From Issuing Oil &amp; Gas Leasing Moratoria Cosponsor</td>
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## APPENDIX B: 30X30 TERMINATION ACT

### House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Date Cosponsored</th>
<th>Oil &amp; Gas Donations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Babin, Brian (R-TX-36)</td>
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<td>Rep. Bacon, Don (R-NE-2)</td>
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<td>Rep. Boebert, Lauren (R-CO-3) (Sponsor)</td>
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<td>Rep. Bost, Mike (R-IL-12)</td>
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<td>Rep. Buck, Ken (R-CO-4)</td>
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<td>Rep. Budd, Ted (R-NC-13)</td>
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<td>Rep. Carl, Jerry L. (R-AL-1)</td>
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<td>Rep. Cloud, Michael (R-TX-27)</td>
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<td>Rep. Crawford, Eric A. &quot;Rick&quot; (R-AR-1)</td>
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<td>Rep. Fallon, Pat (R-TX-4)</td>
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<td>Rep. Good, Bob (R-VA-5)</td>
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<td>Rep. Jackson, Ronny (R-TX-13)</td>
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<td>Rep. Weber, Randy K., Sr. (R-TX-14)</td>
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### Senate

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<th>Member</th>
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<td>Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)</td>
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<td>Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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A small Texas-based group urges new Mexico counties to oppose 30x30

It didn’t take long for a small group founded by the daughter of a couple involved in the 1990s Saguaro National Park controversy to mobilize after President Joe Biden released an executive order in January 2022 that called for conserving 30 percent of the country’s lands and waters by 2030.

Since then, American Stewards of Liberty have successfully led counties across the United States to pass resolutions opposing the initiative, including five New Mexico counties — Chaves, Otero, Grant, Curry, and Sandia — and San Juan County may take such a resolution in the future.

The resolutions are coming from the people and their leaders around small to county sized but sunny, and we should respect that,” said Sandia County Commissioner Jay Black, who introduced a draft and presented it to the commission on Feb. 21, opposing both state and federal initiatives to conserve 30 percent of private lands by 2030.

Sandia County Commissioner Katherine Bruch said the resolutions are not original in the county or version New Mexico.

“They came from a nonprofit out of Texas. And they stood in Otero County and they brought that argument to a commission who went responsive and moved forward,” she said during the contentious discussion at the Feb. 25 meeting. Bruch was one of her commissioners in vote against the resolution.

The resolutions are almost identical and American Stewards of Liberty openly acknowledges its work to get them passed. In a presentation to the San Juan County Commission on Tuesday, American Stewards of Liberty showed a map highlighting the counties and local governments in the United States that have passed such resolutions. The executive director, Margaret Buhle, urged San Juan County to follow in the footsteps of the highlighted counties and pass a resolution opposing conservation of 30 percent of parklands and waters by 2030, Buhle is the daughter of a couple who was involved in the Saguaro National Park controversy in the 1990s in Nevada and saved their cattle without permits or federal lands.

The 30x30 Disinformation Brigade

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