

**Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 7, 2003**

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3010
(Representatives Gulleson, Amerman, Drovdal, Kempenich)
(Senators Bowman, Heitkamp)

A concurrent resolution urging Congress to require the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service to implement a management plan that supports the right of North Dakota ranchers to graze their traditional numbers of livestock in the national grasslands and that allows the mineral resources within the national grasslands to be developed in a reasonable manner.

WHEREAS, 17 national grasslands extend east from the Rocky Mountains to north central Texas and three additional national grasslands extend west from the Rocky Mountains in the Great Basin states of Oregon, California, and Idaho; and

WHEREAS, the state of North Dakota is home to three national grasslands - the Cedar River National Grassland, the Sheyenne National Grassland, and the Little Missouri National Grassland; and

WHEREAS, the Cedar River National Grassland consists of 6,700 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Sheyenne National Grassland consists of 70,180 acres of federal land associated with 64,769 acres of privately owned land located in Ransom and Richland Counties and supplies seasonal forage for approximately 80 ranching operations; and

WHEREAS, the Little Missouri National Grassland, which consists of 1,028,051 acres, is the largest and most northern grassland in the nation and supplies seasonal forage for more than 467 ranching operations; and

WHEREAS, the national grasslands are federal lands administered by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service is charged with administering almost 4,000,000 acres in a fashion that sustains grassland ecosystems while allowing for the production of various goods and services, and supporting and maintaining rural economies and lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, the most recent management plan promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service would result in a potentially major reduction of grazing in the national grasslands located in this state, thereby resulting in a devastating loss to the fragile economy of these rural areas of North Dakota and an economic loss to residents of the counties; and

WHEREAS, 30 percent of North Dakota's oil and gas wells, which produce 36 percent of the crude oil supply for the Tesoro refinery in Mandan, are located within the Little Missouri National Grassland; and

WHEREAS, oil and gas exploration and production and related activities have historically accounted for 58 percent of the economy of the four North Dakota counties comprising the Dakota Prairie Grasslands; and

WHEREAS, the proposed management plan will eliminate or restrict access to 234,460 acres of the 992,870 acres in the grasslands, making 24 percent of the national grasslands virtually off limits for oil and gas exploration and development, resulting in the loss of additional jobs and further damage to the economies of the state as a whole and the local communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to require the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service to implement a management plan that supports the right of North Dakota ranchers to graze their traditional numbers of livestock in the national grasslands and that allows the mineral resources within the national grasslands to be developed in a reasonable manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the chief of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation.

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2003,
at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State