

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Megan Taylor |
| December 4, 2017 | 202-224-6244 |

 **Heller, Heinrich Introduce Bipartisan Public Lands Bill***Legislation Would Reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act*

**Washington, D.C.** — U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) today introduced a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). Before it expired in 2011, FLTFA allowed the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service in the western United States to use the proceeds from sales of certain federally designated areas to protect lands of exceptional conservation value.

“This bipartisan program provides a fiscally responsible way to protect and manage important public lands in Nevada and throughout the West. Not only will it spur economic growth and development, it will also keep conservation at the forefront of the region’s needs,” **said Senator Heller.**

“This program takes a balanced approach to conservation of public lands in the West, and as a result, it has a long history of bipartisan support,” **said Senator Heinrich.** “FLTFA is a commonsense program that achieves the dual goals of conservation and economic development. These funds have been used to protect iconic lands in New Mexico including in the Aztec Ruins National Monument, Santa Fe National Forest, and Elk Springs. FLTFA helps our state preserve the places that draw visitors from around the world and sustain outdoor traditions like hunting and fishing for generations to come.”

For more than a decade until it expired in 2011, FLTFA allowed the preservation of important sites across the western United States without the use of taxpayer money. The program also assisted in better land management practices by disposing of isolated or difficult to manage parcels identified by the public land management agencies themselves.

Additional cosponsors of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act are U.S. Senators Tom Udall (D-NM), James Risch (R-ID), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Cory Gardner (R-CO), and Steve Daines (R-MT).

The legislation is supported by more than 165 groups, including many sportsmen, recreation, conservation, and historic preservation groups, such as The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, and Nevada Land Trust.

“Supporting vibrant economies and safeguarding our environment are both essential to Americans,” said **Larry Selzer, president and chief executive officer of The Conservation Fund.** “That is why we applaud Senators Heinrich and Heller for their leadership in recognizing FLTFA as a practical and effective tool that has allowed businesses, ranchers, counties and others to buy land for strategic growth, while enabling public agencies to protect outstanding natural lands for public recreation in the West.”

###