

Proposed Rules Changes for the 115th Congress
Rep. Rob Bishop, UT-1

1) Scoring of government-to-government land transfers

The federal government owns somewhere between 635-640 million acres of land – almost a third of the United States. Under existing budget conventions, when legislation transfers federal land currently or potentially generating income (usually mineral receipts, grazing leases, timber sales or concessionaire contracts), the conveyance is scored as a loss to the federal government. This is true even if the land is only predicted – as determined by a hostile federal bureaucracy loath to give up a single acre – to create income.

If a local government or a tribe is managing the land, assuming liability risks, and developing the resources, shouldn't it be entitled to the income generated by those efforts? The federal government will save management, maintenance and repair costs. The better economic use of the land will generate not only state and local income tax, but federal income as well. Unfortunately, current budget practices do not fully recognize this fiscal benefit.

Federal lands are unique and create a burden for the surrounding communities. They cannot be taxed and are in disrepair (agencies estimate a roughly \$22 billion dollar maintenance backlog). Often mingled with private land, they isolate communities, limit growth and impact private property rights.

The solution is to convey land without strings to state, local, and tribal governments. Their vitality will reduce the need for other taxpayer-funded federal support, either through Payments in Lieu of Taxes or other programs like Secure Rural Schools. Our rules need to recognize the reality that a government-to-government land conveyance should not be scored.

Proposal: Insert language into the resolution establishing House rules for the 115th Congress: "It shall not be a violation of the House rules or any general protocols to enact a government-to-government land conveyance."

2) Preapproval of major administrative rules

Agencies routinely exploit vaguely-worded language in laws and ignore the state purpose altogether when promulgating regulations. These rules have enormous effect on our individual liberties, our economy, and the rule of law. This abuse is a common theme among political appointees and career bureaucrats. This abuse needs to be confronted.

Proposal – Create a House rule that states: "No major rule shall be funded in law until the authorizing committee of jurisdiction approves the rule."

3) Restoring Federalism in the House via the creation of a Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

The committee would be a permanent, bipartisan body charged with the examination and preservation of the founder's unique contribution to political science: federalism. The body would serve as a forum to gather state and local

partners to discuss the effect of federal actions, administrative and legislative, on our federal system. Recognizing states as “laboratories of democracy,” the committee would hold hearings on state and local generated solutions to vexing public policy problems. It would convene organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Association of Governors to discuss challenges faced in our federal system. The committee would be made up of members from every other standing committee, with no reporting authority or subpoena authority.

Proposal: Amend Rule X to create a Committee on Intergovernmental Relations.