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May 4, 2011

To: All Members, U.S. House of Representatives
Re: Civilian Property Realignment Board

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Property Rights Alliance (PRA), I am writing in support of President Obama's plan to sell or demolish unneeded federal properties by creating an independently commissioned Civilian Property Realignment Board. The formation of an independent board of experts is crucial to efforts to eliminate the red tape and political gridlock that have stymied past efforts. Additionally, in a time when spending has skyrocketed and lawmakers look for ways to control the budget, decreasing federal ownership of property literally shrinks the size and scope of government.

The U.S. Government is currently the nation's largest property owner, with assets estimated at over 900,000 buildings and structures. GAO has warned that real property owned by the government is consistently underutilized or abused, including the government's maintenance of its real property as a part of its High-Risk Series since 2003.

Under the President's plan, 14,000 buildings have been identified as assets that agencies could operate without. After the program is fully operational, it is estimated that taxpayers would save an estimated \$15 billion over the first three years.

While creating a CPRB is an extremely laudable goal and one this organization supports whole-heartedly, I also encourage members of Congress to go a step further by identifying public land holdings that are no longer needed and move quickly to sell them off as well. The federal government owns almost 30 percent of all land in the United States, amounting to more than 650,000,000 acres, much of which is experiencing severe maintenance backlogs or has already gone into disarray. When government owns land it restricts access for recreation, mineral exploration, grazing, hunting, and other traditional uses.

Expansive government ownership infringes upon property rights and curbs economic development. On behalf of the property rights community, we thank you for your leadership on this issue and look forward to your continued efforts to protect private property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsey Zahourek".

Kelsey Zahourek
Executive Director
