

Public-land transfer proponents may have violated lobbying laws

By Joshua Zaffos, High Country News

The central organization that advocates for Western states to take over federal public lands, Utah state Rep. Ken Ivory's American Lands Council, is apparently running roughshod over state legislative rules.

The Colorado secretary of state announced last week that it has "reasonable grounds to believe" the ALC may have violated state lobbying and disclosure rules for failing to report political spending or to register as a lobbyist. The ALC, which leads the West-wide movement to transfer federal lands to states' control, emailed Colorado supporters this spring to build backing for a bill that would have created a county commissioner-led task force to study the benefits of public-lands transfer to the state of Colorado. (The Senate bill failed by one vote.) The ALC has ushered similar bills through nearly every Western state legislature, with varying success.

The notice of possible violations followed an April complaint from Colorado Ethics Watch, a nonprofit watchdog group.

Read the whole story