

Could states manage federally owned land?

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

At a Lake Tahoe fundraiser in August, Elko County Commissioner Demar Dahl – a leader in the movement to transfer federal land to the states – met privately with then-candidate Donald Trump. According to a story Dahl has told many times since then, he asked Trump how he would feel operating a 10-floor hotel in which eight floors were owned by a bureaucracy 2,500 miles away.

“He caught right on,” Dahl said.

This is how Dahl sees Nevada’s position relative to the federal government, which owns more than 85 percent of the state. “So many of the rules and regulations we have to live by are made so far away in Washington by people who are not really familiar with our problems out here,” he said.

In late April, Dahl flew to Washington, D.C., to discuss the future of public lands with President Trump’s staff, after the administration invited him to a signing ceremony for an executive order on education. The political landscape around the land issue had changed since August. Trump’s administration had veered away from the pro-transfer position included in the Republican Party’s platform.

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