

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1883

To provide for the sale of approximately 30 acres of Federal land in Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah, to permit the establishment of a minimally invasive transportation alternative called “SkiLink” to connect 2 ski resorts in the Wasatch Mountains, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 17, 2011

Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. LEE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To provide for the sale of approximately 30 acres of Federal land in Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah, to permit the establishment of a minimally invasive transportation alternative called “SkiLink” to connect 2 ski resorts in the Wasatch Mountains, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wasatch Range Recre-
5 ation Access Enhancement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) there is interest in providing direct public
4 access between the Wasatch Range front and back
5 in the State of Utah by linking ski resorts in the
6 area by means of a skier transport, lift, or tramway;

7 (2) the primary ski resorts in the Wasatch
8 Range in Utah are situated within a 5 mile radius,
9 but currently there is no convenient transportation
10 link between the resorts;

11 (3) The Canyons Ski Resort and Solitude
12 Mountain Resort have proposed a public access
13 transportation connection through construction of a
14 minimally invasive transportation alternative, called
15 “SkiLink”, which would cross approximately 30
16 acres of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
17 from private land at The Canyons Ski Resort in
18 Summit County, Utah, to private land at Solitude
19 Mountain Resort in Big Cottonwood Canyon, Utah;

20 (4) the land and resource management plan for
21 the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest prohibits
22 new alpine ski lifts on National Forest System land;

23 (5) despite efforts by the Utah Department of
24 Transportation, the Wasatch Front Regional Coun-
25 cil, and the Utah Transit Authority to increase tran-
26 sit and carpool access in Big Cottonwood Canyon,

1 daily traffic on winter weekends ranges between
2 8,000 and 9,000 vehicles per day;

3 (6) studies show that the establishment of the
4 SkiLink would reduce ski season vehicle traffic be-
5 tween The Canyons Resort and Solitude Mountain
6 Resort by as many as 18,000 cars per year or
7 1,000,000 fewer miles driven per year, and the
8 amount of the reduction is expected to increase over
9 time;

10 (7) SkiLink would produce immediate traffic
11 benefits, including a reduction in PM 2.5 and other
12 emissions in Parley's Canyon and Big Cottonwood
13 Canyons;

14 (8) a preliminary environmental review of the
15 proposed SkiLink corridor assessed the potential im-
16 pact of SkiLink on special status species, water
17 quality and watershed resources, and visual re-
18 sources and found that no federally listed species or
19 critical habitat would be affected and that any
20 water, plant, and wildlife issues could be addressed
21 through mitigation;

22 (9) minimally invasive, environmentally sound
23 construction techniques would be used to construct
24 SkiLink, including the use of helicopters for concrete
25 placement and tower installations;

1 (10) the winter sport industry in Utah is a sig-
2 nificant contributor to the economy of Utah, with
3 the ski/snowboarding industry bringing
4 \$1,260,000,000 to Utah during the 2009/2010 ski
5 season and resulting in 20,000 jobs; and

6 (11) economic analysis of SkiLink shows it
7 would infuse another \$50,000,000 a year into
8 Utah's economy and create 500 new jobs in the
9 tourism and hospitality industries by creating the
10 largest interconnected ski network in the United
11 States and providing access to more than 6,000
12 acres of ski terrain.

13 **SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE OF NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND,**
14 **UINTA-WASATCH-CACHE NATIONAL FOREST,**
15 **SALT LAKE COUNTY, UTAH.**

16 (a) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED; PURPOSE.—Subject to
17 subsection (e), the Secretary of Agriculture shall convey,
18 by sale, to Canyons-SkiLink, LLC, all right, title, and in-
19 terest of the United States in and to a parcel of National
20 Forest System Land in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Na-
21 tional Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah, consisting of ap-
22 proximately 30 acres, as identified on the map entitled
23 “SkiLink parcels, November 2011”, for the purpose of
24 permitting Canyons-SkiLink, LLC, to construct a ski-lift,
25 gondola, or tramway to serve as a public-access transpor-

1 tation interconnection of the Wasatch Front and the
2 Wasatch Back Mountains.

3 (b) CONSIDERATION.—As consideration for the con-
4 veyance of the National Forest System land under sub-
5 section (a), Canyons-SkiLink, LLC, shall pay to the Sec-
6 retary of Agriculture an amount equal to at least the fair
7 market value of the Federal land as of the date of enact-
8 ment of this Act.

9 (c) DETERMINATION OF FAIR MARKET VALUE.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The fair market value of the
11 National Forest System land to be conveyed under
12 subsection (a) shall be based on an appraisal accept-
13 able to the Secretary of Agriculture.

14 (2) DEADLINE.—The appraisal shall be com-
15 pleted not later than 180 days after the date of en-
16 actment of this Act.

17 (d) REVERSIONARY INTEREST.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of Agri-
19 culture determines at any time that the National
20 Forest System land conveyed under subsection (a)
21 has not been used for a period of 10 years or longer
22 in accordance with the purpose of the conveyance all
23 right, title, and interest in and to the conveyed land,
24 including any improvements thereto shall, at the op-
25 tion of the Secretary of Agriculture, revert to and

1 become the property of the United States, the
2 United States shall have the right of immediate
3 entry onto the land.

4 (2) DETERMINATION.—A determination by the
5 Secretary of Agriculture under this subsection shall
6 be made on the record after an opportunity for a
7 hearing.

8 (e) ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.—In making the
9 conveyance under this section, the Secretary of Agri-
10 culture shall complete all actions that may be required
11 under—

12 (1) the National Environmental Policy Act of
13 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

14 (2) the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16
15 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

16 (3) any other applicable laws.

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