

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH RESEARCH PARK ACT

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2876]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2876) to confirm the use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for public purposes, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 2876 is to confirm the use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for public purposes, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 2876 would address an issue related to the federal government's reversionary interest in approximately 593 acres of non-federal land owned by the University of Utah. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) originally issued a patent for this land, under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, to the University of Utah on October 18, 1968.¹ The patent specified that the land, located in Salt Lake City, could be used only for academic expansion, an arboretum, and a highway to access facilities used for those pur-

¹U.S. Department of the Interior, "Recreation and public Purposes Land Patent to the University of Utah" October 18, 1968, <https://d182hggomw8pjd.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/08/05141720/1968-10th-US-Grant-Land-Patent.pdf>.

poses.² Failing to adhere to the terms of the patent would trigger the reversionary interest, transferring the land back to the BLM.

In the intervening decades, the University of Utah developed the land, now known as Research Park, into a research and development center that serves both the university and the local workforce.³ Research Park has helped over 100 start-ups, conceived mostly by University of Utah students and researchers.⁴ The park currently hosts approximately 50 companies, 81 university departments, and a workforce of more than 14,000 people.⁵ Among these are innovative companies specializing in biotechnology, pharmaceutical development, and manufacturing, all of which provide opportunities for students to learn and work among experts.⁶ This parcel has been used in this fashion by the university since the issuance of the patent and BLM has not been involved in the management of the land for more than 55 years.

A recent review of Research Park uncovered that the parcel was not in compliance with the patent because of the commercial nature of the companies currently located there. Unfortunately, the restrictive terms of the reversionary clause mean that the university cannot continue to host these companies, despite the considerable educational and economic benefits they provide to students and the broader community.⁷ This restriction also prevents the university from further developing Research Park to benefit students and the local community.

Sponsored by Representative Blake Moore (R-UT-01), H.R. 2876 would confirm that the current uses of Research Park, as approved in writing by the Department of the Interior on December 10, 1970, are valid public purposes consistent with the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. This bill also affirms that other university-related purposes, such as student housing and a transit hub, are consistent with the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. These changes would enable the university to move forward with its plans to enhance Research Park further by making it more walkable, creating additional residential facilities, and bringing in additional laboratories and offices.⁸ While the reversionary interest will remain in place, H.R. 2876 would bring the university back into compliance with the original terms of the deed and remove any uncertainty about the land reverting to the federal government because of its current use. Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) is the sponsor of the companion legislation in the Senate.⁹

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 2876 was introduced on April 10, 2025, by Representative Blake Moore (R-UT). The bill was referred to the Committee on

²*Id.*

³The Office of Senator Mike Lee, “University of Utah Research Park Act,” November 2, 2021, https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/2021.11.3_Research_Park_continuation.pdf.

⁴*Id.*

⁵Brian Maffly, “U. has big plans for Research Park, but land patent is getting in the way,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2021/12/15/u-has-big-plans-research/>.

⁶*Id.*

⁷*Id.*

⁸Tony Semerad, “University of Utah plans major revamp of research park on Foothill Drive, adding lots of housing,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, June 9, 2020, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2020/06/09/dense-walkable-amenity/>.

⁹S. 1453; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1453>.

Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. On April 29, 2025, the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on the bill. On June 25, 2025, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2876 by unanimous consent. The bill was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held on April 29, 2025.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 names the legislation the “University of Utah Research Park Act.”

Section 2. Confirmation of use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for valid public purposes

Section 2 confirms that the University of Utah’s current use of approximately 593 acres of land as a research park is a valid public purpose consistent with the requirements of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.¹⁰ This section also confirms that any other uses of the land as a research park or for a related university purpose, including student housing or transit hub development, are also valid public purposes consistent with the requirements of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

¹⁰ 43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.

H.R. 2876, University of Utah Research Park Act			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on June 25, 2025			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	0	0
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 2876 would confirm the acceptability of the University of Utah's ongoing use of a 594-acre parcel of land. In 1968, the Department of the Interior conveyed the land to the university under the condition that it be used for public purposes. The university established and is currently operating an academic research park on the land, which houses technology, education, and medical facilities. The bill also would allow the university to develop student housing and a transit hub on the land and to use the area for other purposes related to the research park. Because those uses would have no cost to the federal government, CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2876 would have no effect on the federal budget.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Katherine Chou. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

2. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to confirm the use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for public purposes, and for other purposes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

According to the Congressional Budget Office, H.R. 2876 contains no unfunded mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95–220, as amended by Public Law 98–169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill’s purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

As ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources, H.R. 2876 would make no changes in existing law.

