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NEWS

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Congressman Arrington: Why I oppose the Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge expansion

The Biden-Harris 30x30 plan is government overreach

Washington, September 17, 2024

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The Dallas Morning News

**CONGRESSMAN ARRINGTON: WHY
I OPPOSE THE MULESHOE
WILDLIFE R** **EXPANSION**

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OPINION

By Jodey Arrington

September 17, 2024

AS SEEN IN THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Texas congressman Jodey Arrington opposes an expansion of the Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge. Of the three species cited in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's justification for this expansion, sandhill cranes (photo) and pronghorns both have a population of 1 million according to conservation groups, he writes. (iStockphoto / Getty Images)

President Ronald Reagan famously quipped, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: 'I'm from the government, and I'm here to help.' "

When I learned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was proposing an unprecedented 1,000% expansion of the Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge in West Texas and eastern New Mexico, from 6,400 acres to 70,000 acres, bells went off for several reasons.

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thinly veiled attempt by the Biden-Harris administration to gobble up more private property for their 30x30 plan to place 30% of all lands and waters in the U.S. under federal control by 2030.

Third, this plan is flat-out unnecessary for the conservation of wildlife, as the three species listed for protection are not even at risk of being extinct or endangered.

As chair of the House Budget Committee and someone deeply concerned about the fiscal decline of our country, I am convinced this federal expansion is an egregious misuse of tax dollars. It is inexplicable that the Biden-Harris administration could justify buying up more federal land at a time when our country faces an annual deficit of almost \$2 trillion and the national debt has surpassed \$35 trillion.

Thanks to spending-induced inflation, interest on the debt has tripled and is now at \$1 trillion, crowding out funding for national priorities such as defense and infrastructure.

On top of that, two of the most important programs for seniors — Social Security and Medicare — will be insolvent in little more than a decade.

I find it absurd that the Biden-Harris administration wants to use our tax dollars this way, given all these financial challenges.

The Biden-Harris 30x30 executive order, signed during the administration's first week in office, should concern all Americans, as it calls for federal control of 30% of all U.S. land by 2030. I don't trust this administration to defend property rights and our liberties, especially given its track record of habitual regulatory overreach, and there is no reason to believe it won't only get worse as the federal government's footprint grows.

This is the same administration that enacted the "Waters of the United States" rule, which unconstitutionally regulated non-navigable water sources for farmers and ranchers; used the Endangered Species Act to restrict agricultural and energy production in West Texas; and implemented policies like the [Methane Rule](#), [Clean Power Plan 2.0](#), and [LNG Export Ban](#) which undermines oil and gas producers

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Conclusion

steadily over the past decade.

Additionally, if property owners would like to sell their properties or enter into easements for conservation purposes, they can already do so through private buyers. Therefore, I am left to conclude the following: If this plan is not truly about preserving wildlife, it is likely just another Trojan horse to expand not only the federal footprint, but overall government control.

I recently sponsored an amendment to defund this plan through the [FY25 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act](#), which passed the House in July. I will continue to fight to ensure that this program and others like it find no refuge on my watch.

Jodey Arrington represents the 19th Congressional District of Texas and serves as chair of the U.S. House Budget Committee.



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Washington, DC Office

1111 Longworth House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4005
District-wide Toll Free:
(888) 217-0281
Fax: (202) 225-9615

Lubbock Office

1312 Texas Ave. | Ste. 219
Lubbock, TX 79401
Phone: (806) 763-1611
Fax: (806) 767-9168

Abilene Office

500 Chestnut St. | #819
Abilene, TX 79602
Phone: (325) 675-9779
Fax: (325) 675-5038

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