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Week 23

Federal Land Sovereignty

"The federal government owns the land. It answers to the people. Not the NGOs."

1. The Problem

The federal government owns 640 million acres — 28% of all U.S. land — but NGO litigation routinely blocks energy production, mining, grazing, and timber harvest on that land for years, costing the Treasury billions in forgone revenue while making the U.S. more dependent on foreign energy and strategic materials. The permitting process has no defined timeline. Projects die in administrative limbo while the deficit compounds.

2. The Governing Principle

The federal government owns the land. It answers to the people — not the NGOs. Federal land produces maximum sustainable revenue for the American people. Litigation that blocks productive use without a legitimate constitutional or statutory basis is streamlined through structural reforms. The government manages its own property in the public interest, not in the interest of the organizations that file the most lawsuits.

3. The Specific Policy

- **Permit streamlining — 2-year maximum for all federal resource permits:** energy production, mining, grazing, and timber permits on federal land receive a final decision within 2 years of a complete application — approved, denied, or modified. No indefinite delay through administrative process. If no decision is issued within 2 years the permit is deemed approved under the applied-for terms subject to standard environmental conditions. The burden of timely decision is on the agency, not the applicant.

- **NEPA reform — categorical exclusions expanded, scope limited:** the National Environmental Policy Act requires environmental review before federal actions. The review has metastasized into a tool for blocking resource production indefinitely regardless of actual environmental impact. Expand categorical exclusions for projects below a defined environmental impact threshold. Limit the scope of NEPA review to the actual project footprint and reasonably foreseeable direct impacts — not

every conceivable downstream effect any organization can hypothesize in litigation.

- **Litigation reform — bond requirement for injunctions blocking federal resource permits:** any party seeking a court injunction to block a federally permitted resource project on federal land posts a bond equal to the estimated economic value of the delay — government revenue forgone, jobs not created, and energy not produced during the injunction period. If the injunction is ultimately upheld

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the bond is returned. If it is not, the bond goes to the U.S. Treasury. This does not limit the right to sue — it requires challengers to bear the cost of the delay they impose on the American people.

- **Federal land revenue at market value:** federal grazing, mineral, timber, and energy royalties at market value — coordinates with Week 15 alternative revenue. The federal government does not subsidize private extraction of public resources at below-market rates while running a \$2 trillion annual deficit. Market pricing is not a punishment for users. It is the standard.

- **NGO federal funding and litigation disclosure:** any organization that receives federal grants and simultaneously litigates against federal resource management decisions on federal land discloses both its federal funding and its litigation activity publicly in a searchable federal database. The American people have a right to know when organizations funded with federal tax dollars are using the courts to block federally permitted activities on federal land.

- **Coordinate with Week 11 water infrastructure and Week 26 desert campus:** federal land permitting reform applies directly to the Week 26 desert campus site designation and the Week 11 water infrastructure projects. The same permitting delays that block energy projects block infrastructure projects. The reform applies uniformly.

4. Estimated Cost

Permit streamlining and NEPA reform — accelerated energy and mineral production on federal land: estimated \$10-25 billion per year in additional federal royalty revenue from projects currently delayed by administrative and litigation bottlenecks. Combined with Week 15 market-rate grazing and mineral fees: \$15-40 billion per year in additional annual federal land revenue at full implementation.

5. Year 1 Implementation and Measurable Result

Year 1 measurable result: 2-year permit maximum published as binding regulatory standard within 90 days; NEPA categorical exclusion expansion rule published within 120 days; litigation bond requirement proposed to Congress within 60 days; NGO federal funding and litigation disclosure database live within 90 days; 50 previously stalled federal resource permits processed to decision by end of Year 1.

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