

**Committee of Jurisdiction:** Public Lands

**Title of Resolution:** Refining the local match land value credit for federal environmental projects.

**Issue:** Federal environmental restoration grant programs allow for the local match to include the value of the public land under restoration. However, that public land value credit is significantly reduced because it cannot be used for private development, and the credit does not reflect the value of the on-going maintenance and stewardship of restored lands. To compensate for these issues, federal environmental grant programs should provide a credit of two-times the value of the land to be restored.

**Proposed Policy:** NACo encourages the Executive Branch to recognize the value of land stewardship through doubling the public land value credit for the local match in environmental restoration grant programs.

**Background:** Federal agencies such as the US Army Corp of Engineers rely on local government agencies and nonprofit conservation organizations as partners in important landscape-scale restoration and improvement projects. Generally, the required local share of such a project is 35%, and the nonfederal partner can claim the value of the land as part of their calculation. Specifically, the nonfederal partner can request credit for "interests in land owned prior to the project (which) will be valued for credit purposes as of the date of the award of the construction contract."

The process by which the land is valued is the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions, also known as the Yellow Book Process. Under the Yellow Book Process, land that has been permanently protected and therefore cannot be developed is valued at its lowest possible level. This valuation strategy does not consider the long-term stewardship costs and maintenance activities required to ensure restoration projects are maintained after completion. Doubling the public land value credit for the local match would allow more and larger projects to be completed and would support equitable distribution of federal dollars in lower income communities.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Reduces the cost burden of rural and urban counties who participate in federal landscape-scale restoration and improvement projects.

**Sponsor:**

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