



Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

1301 W. SEVENTH ST. ★ SUITE 201 ★ FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-2665
817-332-7064 ★ 800-242-7820 ★ F:817-332-6441 ★ WWW.TSCRA.ORG

The
Cattleman

 **CATTLE RAISER**
INSURANCE
Hardworking Insurance for Hardworking Families

January 20, 2017

Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 428/S. 90 by Representative Mac Thornberry – “*Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act*”

Dear Chairman McClintock:

The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) is a 140 year-old trade association and is the largest and oldest livestock organization based in Texas. TSCRA has a membership of more than 17,500 beef cattle operations, ranching families and businesses. These members represent over 55,000 individuals directly involved in ranching and beef production who manage over 4 million head of cattle on more than 76 million acres of range and pasture land primarily in Texas, Oklahoma and throughout the Southwest.

TSCRA strongly supports H.R. 428/S. 90 – “*Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act*” by Rep. Mac Thornberry and Sen. John Cornyn. This legislation would save landowners legal expenses regarding property they have long owned and payed taxes on along the Red River. The legislation would further support the Red River Compact and reaffirm many previous legal rulings.

TSCRA opposes any federal control or management of private property along the Red River. TSCRA is concerned that any control and/or management will take away the long held and legally established private property rights of landowners along the 116-mile stretch of contested area. Specifically, the proposal by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) could threaten ranchers’ and landowners’ ability to use their land for grazing livestock and could allow the public on privately owned land for recreation and hunting without the permission of private landowners.

There are over 142 million privately owned acres in Texas, which represent a majority of the entire state. Numerous examples prove that the expansion of federal control and/or management of private land constitute the first step towards the erosion of private property rights. This will not only jeopardize the proud history that landowners have, but it will seriously threaten, limit, and/or take away an important part of our state and national economies. Federal control and/or management of private land will also further challenge future generations from being able to own land and start and continue agricultural operations.

This legislation will help provide legal certainty to private property owners being affected by this attempted land grab. TSCRA supports commissioning a survey of the contested area along the Red River using the gradient boundary survey method developed and backed by the Supreme Court to find the proper ownership boundary between public and private lands. Further, this legislation provides Texas and Oklahoma the authority to oversee the surveyors and approve the final survey to ensure the Supreme Court instructions are properly followed. H.R. 428/S. 90 will also require that a notice of survey approval, a copy of the survey, and any related field notes be provided to each individual land owner after the survey is completed.

Ranchers and agricultural producers in this region are proud stewards of the land and remain the most adversely impacted by the BLM proposal.

TSCRA respectfully requests your favorable consideration of this legislation. Please contact Jason Skaggs at 512-469-0171 or at jskaggs@tscra.org if TSCRA can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Thorpe".

Richard Thorpe
President