

Statement of Glenn Casamassa
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Before the
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining
Concerning
S. 3245 – Lake Fannin Conveyance Act
August 22, 2018

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Wyden, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding S. 3245 – Lake Fannin Conveyance Act. I am Glenn Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System (NFS), USDA Forest Service.

S. 3245 would convey, without consideration, all right, title, and interest in approximately 2,025 acres of National Forest System land on the Caddo National Grassland in Texas to Fannin County, Texas for public purposes.

USDA appreciates the interest of Fannin County in acquiring these lands for sustainable operation of recreation facilities in the area. Forest Service staff have conducted economic studies in the past seeking ways to improve revenue under existing authorities as a means to maintain and operate the recreation facilities adjacent to the lake. Results of those studies show significant challenges in achieving this goal. We have engaged regularly with County officials, including twice in the past two months, exploring alternatives that could provide a shared solution without requiring legislation to convey the land. County officials have indicated support for a long-term historic property lease that could provide for sustainable management of the historic recreation facilities valued by the community, and tangible steps have been taken that could allow for implementation within the next several months. This or other potential alternatives could meet the County's interests, and would be consistent with longstanding federal policy that market value consideration should be paid to the United States for conveyance of federal lands owned by all Americans.

USDA hopes to continue to work with the committee, the bill's sponsor, and the community on creative solutions for our shared goal of long-term sustainable management.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this bill and I look forward to your questions.