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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

AUG 03 2001

Honorable Chris Cannon
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Cannon:

Thank you for your letter of April 12, 2001, regarding the proposed market-based transfer of grazing permits within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

I am pleased to report that the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument office is aware of and strongly supports the Grand Canyon Trust's proposal for the Big Bowns Bench allotment, the Last Chance allotment, and the Drip Tank pasture of the Headwaters grazing allotment. Further, if the Grand Canyon Trust and affected ranchers reach an agreement, the BLM will work quickly to determine if the animal unit months of permitted use proposed for relinquishment should be removed from the forage allocation base and reallocated to other uses, such as resolving resource or use conflicts. In addition, the BLM will amend its land use plan for the area, as appropriate.

Voluntary relinquishments of grazing permits can provide a marketplace-oriented resolution for public land conflicts. These arrangements are generally "win-win" situations, which can help stabilize the ranching community and help avoid involuntary retirement of permits when polarized resource conflicts are occurring. I agree this type of market-based solution can provide an excellent opportunity for local groups to work together to benefit the community and the land. Should the land use plan amendment process result in an affirmation of this approach, I would strongly endorse this action.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Norton
Gale A. Norton

