



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 7, 2023

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Historic Roadways Protection Act, Nick Sandberg, Public Lands Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Resolution of Support

SUMMARY

Senator Lee has introduced legislation (Historic Roadways Protection Act) to protect public access to roads on BLM-administered lands in Utah. The bill would prevent BLM from closing any R.S. 2477 roads until all legal actions have been resolved. Currently there are over 12,500 such ROW claims in Utah to be processed in federal courts.

Many of these claims are in San Juan County. BLM has been revising travel management plans as required by a 2017 settlement agreement resulting from litigation over travel plans implemented with BLM's 2008 Resource Management Plans (RMP). Two of these RMPs include lands in San Juan County. BLM's revised travel plans have and likely will close some San Juan County roads, roads over which BLM may have no jurisdiction or authority to close.

This resolution supports Senator Lee's legislation which would protect R.S. 2477 roads in San Juan County from being closed prior to resolution of court adjudication actions.

HISTORY/PAST ACTION

San Juan County and the State of Utah have previously filed R.S. 2477 claims for qualifying roads in the county. BLM has completed two revised travel management plans including roads in San Juan County and will be completing other travel plans in the future such as a plan for the Bears Ears Monument.

FISCAL IMPACT

None or unknown.