**Legislative alert:** Trust Lands are vital to funding our children’s education in Utah. Decisions on how those funds are utilized are made on a local level by the School Community Council (SCC) at your school. The governing bodies that manage the Trust lands and funds were set up in the State constitution to work as an independent body beholden strictly to the Trusts’ beneficiaries, and to decrease the outside influence of political agendas. Two bills that would compromise the mission of the Trust (to serve the best interest of the Trust beneficiaries) are on the agenda. We believe these bills are not in the best interest of the school children of Utah.

**HB 262 School and Institutional Trust Lands Amendments-** currently this bill would exempt the sale or lease of certain large aggregations of trust lands from advertising requirements and mineral rights restrictions. We believe that a free market that advertises the sale of land encourages a competitive market bid and could result in an increase in the sales price of the land. By not advertising, there is no chance for competitive bids, therefore no driving up the sales price, potentially resulting in a net decrease in the money that would go to the beneficiaries of the Trust, the school children of Utah.

**HB 320 School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration Amendments-** this bill would require each sale of land, regardless of size, to obtain a costly and time-consuming market analysis and submit to a legislative subcommittee for approval each time. The money to complete this for each sale would be pulled from the Trust Lands, instead of being distributed to the school children of Utah. That cost is currently estimated at $7 million. That is money straight from the School Children. Furthermore, it requires the legislator to be notified if any Trust Lands that are to be exchanged lie in their district. The administering bodies of our Trust Lands (SITLA, SITFO, LTPAOC) were set up to be independent of Legislative political influence. For years before these administering bodies were formed, the Trust Lands were grossly mismanaged and used as political favors and bargaining powers. This bill is trying to re-introduce legislators back into this process.

There is an underlying political agenda behind these two bills. We need to keep the independent boards, who have pledged fidelity to Trust Land beneficiaries and not to political agendas, in control of the Trust Lands, and keep the politicians agendas out.

**What Can you do?**

Write your representatives to let them know you oppose these two bills because they are not in the best interest of the Trust beneficiaries, the school children of Utah.

Dear [representative],

I am concerned about bills HB 262 and HB 320 that affect the school children of Utah through the Trust Lands and would encourage you to oppose these bills as they are currently written.

HB 262 takes away the requirement to advertise sales of School Trust Lands. A healthy capitalist free market depends on the open competition of bids to drive up sale prices. Without advertising we do not allow for that competition. We must do all we can to ensure the highest price is paid for our Trust Lands for the direct benefit of our children. This piece of legislation takes away the vital free-market advertising that could drive up bids. The Trust Lands administration is beholden to do what is in the best interest of the beneficiaries only, and not in regard to any other agency or company. That would be a breach of Trust. Please oppose this bill as it is written, and demand that sales of Trust Lands be bound to advertising.

HB 320 would require each sale of Trust Lands to pay for a costly market analysis and submission to a legislative subcommittee regardless of the size of the transaction. The fiscal note for that is currently estimated at $7 million. That is money that will come straight from the money that would otherwise go to the school children of Utah. We are opposed to this blatant overreach that would cost our school children educational funds in an ongoing manner.

This bill also tries to re-insert politicians back into Trust Lands administration. SITLA was formed to administer the Trust Lands on behalf of the Trust beneficiaries and without political agenda or pressure. This bill contradicts the fiduciary promise of the Trust to act in behalf of the Trust beneficiaries best interest only. There is political agenda behind this bill and we are vehemently opposed.