

Dear Elected Officials,

Thank you for your email and the attached letter.

I'd like to particularly thank you for the last paragraph of your letter, where you acknowledge that Best Friends is a part of our shared community. This is something that can't be overstated and really should lead us to the conclusion that, almost without exception, what's in the best interests of Kanab and Kane County is also in Best Friends' best interests, and vice versa. I believe this includes our purchase of the SITLA parcels.

As you know, Best Friends is Kane County's largest employer. Half of our staff, or about 425 people not counting their families, live in the Kanab area. Additionally, our collective tourist base and the related local businesses all depend on the area having sufficient water supplies. So, of course we're happy to discuss how Kanab can retain the rights associated with the wells on Parcel 32. Incidentally, I didn't know the city had wells there until the late stages of our negotiation with SITLA and they did not play a part in our decision to pursue this land. Best Friends has absolutely no interest in controlling the water supply for Kanab and its citizens, including our employees, who are also your constituents.

I also agree with your collective desires to see the preservation of the pristine lands that we're purchasing. In fact, this was our purpose in making the deal. We recognize what an asset these lands are to our local economy, to the recreation of our friends, neighbors and employees, and just what an existential threat the sand mine posed to these mutual interests. While I know there was some disagreement as to the immediate economic benefits, at the very least, the medium-term effects of the sand mine would have been highly destructive to any recreational use of these lands, to the economy of the area, and to the health of everyone who lives here. And if we're looking for the real threat to the water supply, it wasn't from Best Friends, it was from the mining operation.

We're also in clear agreement that the grazing rights of our neighbors should be protected. As you probably know, there are no grazing leases associated with the Red Knoll area. Ben Clarkson holds a grazing lease in Section 2 and we hold the grazing rights on Section 32. A

portion of Section 32 has been used by James Mace to graze his cattle. Just like we have with other ranchers who we've granted sub-leases on BLM land where we held grazing rights, we expect to honor Ben's rights and are in amicable discussions with James as well. Grazing has never been an issue for us, and we don't expect that it will be now.

There do seem to be a few misunderstandings about all of this, and I'd like to take this opportunity to give you our perspective. First, this land was not purchased with bond proceeds. In fact, to date, we have spent approximately \$6,500,000 of bond money and all bond activity has been utilized for its intended purpose, to the benefit of dozens of businesses in Kanab, Orderville, Cedar City, St. George and Alton. If it is helpful, we are happy to provide you with a list of those businesses. Second, we did not attempt to fly under the COVID radar with the timing of this purchase. Our negotiations with SITLA commenced well before the onset of this pandemic. As a part of the SITLA sale process there were multiple public notices published in the Southern Utah News beginning on February 20, 2020. To our knowledge, SITLA received no opposition or competing offers as a result of its process, although we did receive several inquiries from local individuals regarding our intentions and the proposed sale.

Our purchase of these properties, which is now fully executed and enforceable, is for no purpose other than to *protect* the water, the natural beauty, the tourism, the outdoor recreation and everything that makes this region "the greatest earth on show." It is precisely to *prevent* the area in and around Kanab and the Best Friends sanctuary from the type of development we believe is detrimental to the shared goals and values of Kanab, Kane County and Best Friends. We would have been thrilled if these goals could've been achieved simply by obtaining the mineral rights; it would have saved us a lot of money. However, mineral leases on SITLA land are terminable upon thirty days' notice and, given that SITLA has the obligation to generate revenue from its holdings for the benefit of the Utah public schools, it would've only been a matter of time until another mining operation came along and we would've been right back where we started. Accordingly, an outright purchase was our only option. So, although our hand was forced, it will ultimately preserve the local economies, Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, and the environment. It will also benefit all your constituents and, as a huge bonus, the Utah public education system.

There are also things that you may not know about Best Friends, and this seems like the perfect opportunity to tell you about them, because quite honestly, we're welcomed with open arms and sometimes financially enticed by every municipality in which we have a presence, except

for Kanab. As a proud daughter of Utah, a fiscal conservative and a small businessperson heavily invested in Kane County, this is very personal to me.

Best Friends started out, as many of you know, with literally nothing. When I arrived here in 1996, we were raising about \$800,000 a year. Today we are a \$110,000,000 a year organization that generates over \$22,500,000 annually through wages and benefits and which generates a local economic impact (based on an independent economic study by John Dunham and Associates) of \$42,300,000 including the sale of groceries, gas, gifts, dining and extended hotel stays to our visiting members, volunteers and donors. Additionally, many of our members have second homes here, purchased from local residents and constructed, improved and maintained by local contractors, and they pay local property taxes.

As a national organization we have three lifesaving centers in Los Angeles, including a municipal shelter in partnership with city, and centers in Salt Lake City, New York and Atlanta. We're building a new center in Houston and another in Bentonville, Arkansas in partnership with the Walton Family. We frequently receive keys to cities, recognition from major corporations (most recently the NBA/the late David Stern and, separately, from Michael Jordan), and awards of appreciation from mayors, governors, state senators and representatives. We've been voted the Harris Poll (one of the national standard bearers for measuring consumer affinity for brands) Non-Profit Brand of the Year for six of the past nine years, over such iconic causes like Special Olympics, UNICEF and St. Jude's - and we all know what amazing work they do. And we've been recognized for six consecutive years as Utah's outstanding non-profit.

The love of animals being universal, we have millions of members from across the political spectrum. Last year we entered into a partnership with Southern Utah University in developing a curriculum that will bring more positive attention to Southern Utah.

All of this brings praise and profit to Utah, Kane County and Kanab. Best Friends is, quite simply, a Utah success story, self-made and home grown, and something to be celebrated by all Utahns. We certainly view it that way, and we couldn't have done it without the support of our neighbors and communities.

To me, as a private sector champion, I understand your concern of big government and absentee control of public lands as well as your preference that they be maintained for private use. So, it is a little troubling to see this being accomplished, by a very local private business, and still meet resistance from you guys.

So, again, while it's difficult for me to see any divergence in our interests when it comes to this purchase, I do see some misunderstandings and a few outstanding details that can be worked out. Hopefully I've cleared up some of these issues here and, as far as any others are concerned, we're happy to get together, discuss and hopefully resolve them as well. Please contact Arlyn Bradshaw, arlyn@bestfriends.org, or (801) 673-5052, to make arrangements.

I thank you for the opportunity to give you a better understanding of Best Friends, to clear up any misunderstandings and, mostly, to discuss how our purchase of the SITLA lands is in our mutual best interests.

Sincerely,