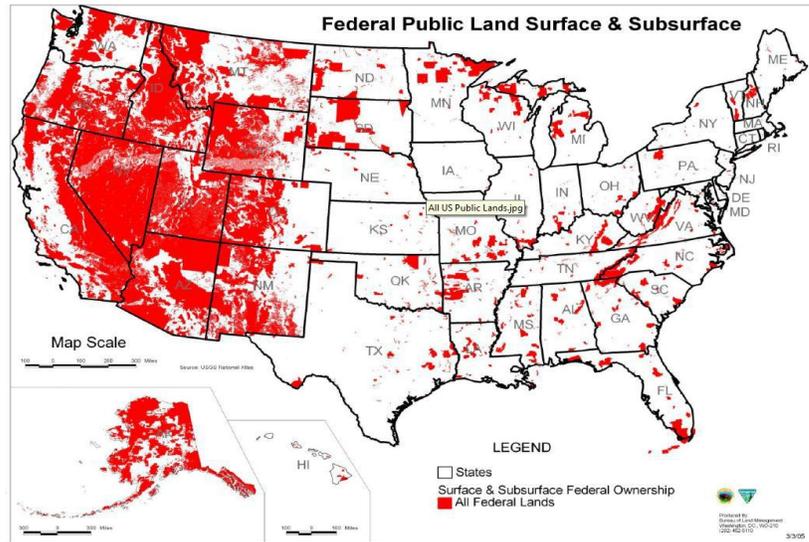


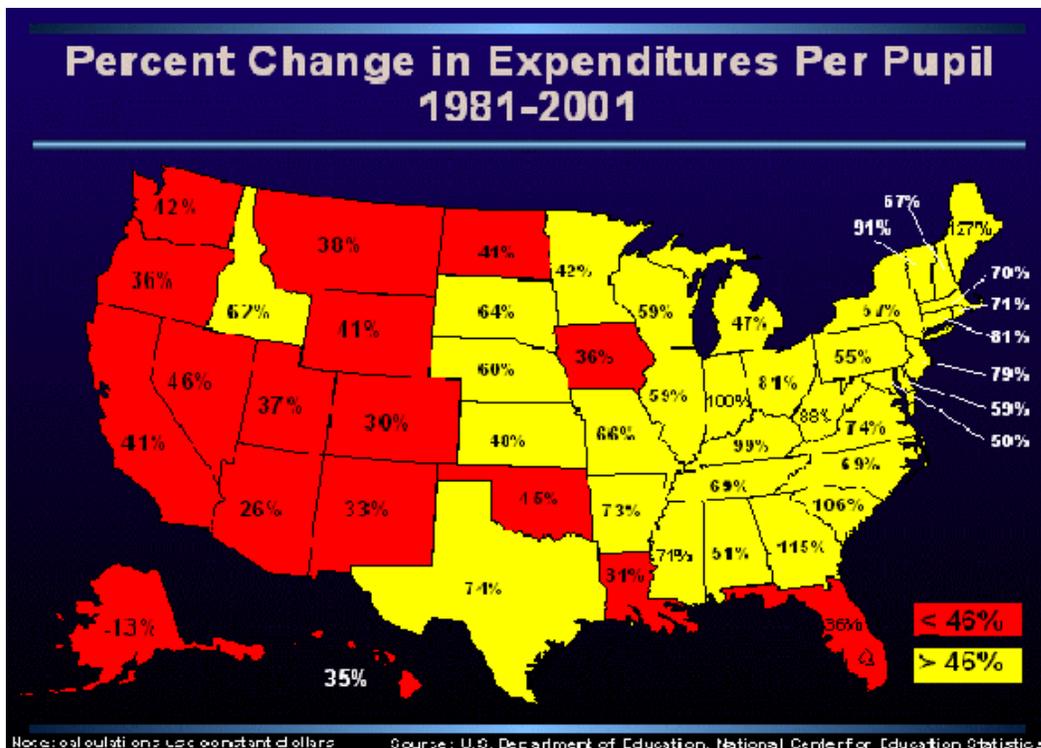
# Public Lands

The federal government currently owns 1/3 of the land in the United States, an area six times larger than the state of California. The vast majority of this land is in Western states. Local governments in the West complain that the federal government does a poor job of managing land it owns, and that they miss out on substantial tax revenues from potential energy extraction, mining, timber harvesting and other forms of economic development.



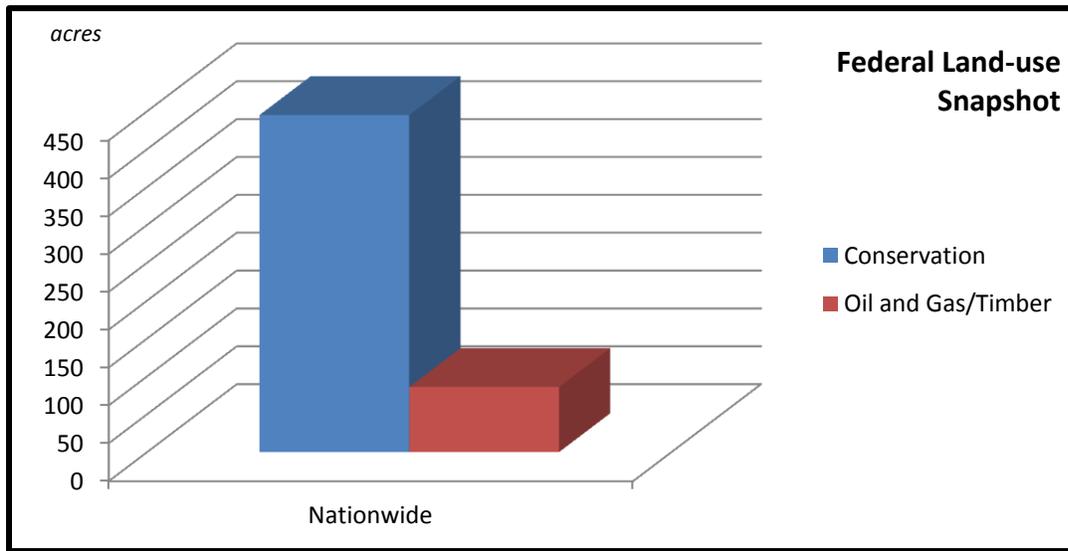
## Public Lands and Education

The lack of revenue often leads to a decrease in the quality of public services available in these communities, especially in rural areas where access to government resources is already more difficult than in large cities. One government service that is negatively impacted is education, where Western states with heavy amounts of federal land ownership find that spending is unable to keep up with the rapid increase in the number of students enrolled. As the chart below shows, per capita spending on education is much slower in the West than in most of the rest of the country.



## Energy Production on Public Lands

Once land is taken by the federal government, it is often locked away forever from economic production. The federal government owns approximately 650 million acres of land, the majority of which is locked up for conservation purposes, either as national parks, wilderness areas, national forests or some other protective designation. As the chart below shows, over 400 million acres are used for conservation, whereas about 50 million acres are used for oil/gas or timber production. Federal lands contain 46% of the proven crude reserves in the United States.



The amount of public acreage made available for oil and gas drilling has steadily declined over the past few years, as well. In 2008, the Bureau of Land Management offered 2516 parcels for oil and gas leasing. In 2012, that number dropped to 2315 parcels. An additional challenge for companies attempting to drill federal lands is the complex, costly bureaucratic red tape that comes with the permitting process. The amount of time it takes to process a permit to drill on federal lands increased from 212 days to 228 days between from 2008-2012. In North Dakota, it takes 10 days to process a drilling permit on state lands. While overall oil and gas production has increased in this same time period, according to the Congressional Research Service, 100% of the increase in production has been on state or private land.

The Congressional Western Caucus will continue to pressure the current administration to expedite the permitting process for responsible energy development on federal lands. Additionally, the federal government should partner with states and localities to manage forests and other lands to find the practices that benefit state and local communities economically and ecologically.