

Senator Casperson offered the following resolution:

**Senate Resolution No. 57.**

A resolution to urge the United States Forest Service to use appropriate negotiation strategies when handling property line disputes rather than intimidation and bullying tactics.

Whereas, The United States Forest Service (USFS) has over 272,000 miles of forest land that borders with private landowners across the nation. Original surveys of this land by the federal General Land Office go back 200 hundred years, and physical evidence left by the original surveyors no longer exists in many cases. Lack of physical evidence has left many landowners relying on decades old fence lines and outbuildings as the indication of property boundaries; and

Whereas, Congress required the USFS to survey and post all boundaries of its properties by the year 2020. This undertaking means the USFS has laid claim to property that for years was thought to be privately owned. The USFS is relying on its recent surveys as the true property boundaries no matter the surveys made by private landowners; and

Whereas, The USFS has taken it upon itself to aggressively inform private landowners of potential encroachments, using strong-arm tactics to get its point across. Such tactics were used in the fall of 2014 when several elderly hunters had gathered at a privately owned hunting camp bordering the Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The USFS, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, stormed the hunters' deer blinds with firearms exposed. The USFS had the hunters return to camp where the USFS officer had his taser gun uncovered in the middle of his chest to impress and intimidate the camp owner. The owner had no idea he was encroaching. The scare and threats resulted in heart problems for one of the hunters; and

Whereas, It appears many private property owners across the nation are having similar confrontations with the USFS. The USFS would elicit more cooperative response from landowners if it were to inform of potential encroachments through written contacts first rather than intimidation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the United States Forest Service to use appropriate negotiation strategies when handling property line disputes rather than intimidation and bullying tactics; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the Michigan congressional delegation and the chief of the United States Forest Service.