

HUD Sec. Scott Turner announces effort to use federal land to build low-cost housing amid shortage

By [CP Staff](#), Thursday, March 20, 2025



DOI Sec. Doug Burgum and HUD Sec. Scott Turner appear in a video released March 17, 2025. | YouTube/HUDchannel

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Scott Turner has teamed up with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum in a bid to transform "underutilized" federal lands into low-income housing.

The Joint Task Force on Federal Land for Housing initiative [announced](#) Monday aims to bridge the nation's shortage of approximately 7 million affordable homes by tapping into the federal government's vast land holdings.

The partnership seeks to "unlock federal lands for the benefit of all Americans," Turner said, adding that HUD will work with the Department of the Interior to "assess the housing needs in areas where federal lands may be available yet underutilized and implement tailored housing programs with guidance from states and localities."

In a Wall Street Journal [op-ed](#) titled "Federal Lands Can Be Home Sweet Home," the two officials outlined their vision for the initiative, which builds on the Interior Department's oversight of more than 500 million acres of federal land.

"America needs more affordable housing, and the federal government can make it happen by making federal land available to build affordable housing stock," they wrote. "Under this agreement, HUD will pinpoint where housing needs are most pressing and guide the process by working with state and local leaders who know their communities best. Interior will identify locations that can support homes while carefully considering environmental impact and land-use restrictions."

According to the Library of Congress, the federal government owns over a quarter of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the U.S., or the equivalent of about 640 million acres. Several federal agencies oversee the management of those properties, including the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior, and others.

While the actual amount of federally owned land in each of the 50 states varies widely, Alaska has the highest concentration of federal land ownership, where over 60% of all federally owned land is located, according to congressional data.

Turner was confirmed as HUD secretary in February after serving as executive director of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council in the first Trump administration.

Turner, who played defensive back in the NFL for eight seasons, also served as an associate pastor at Prestonwood Baptist Church, a prominent megachurch in Plano, Texas.

Last month, Turner told the audience at the Conservative Political Action Conference in National Harbor, Maryland, that he believes God is calling him to make a "generational impact."

Turner discussed the housing affordability crisis facing many young Americans, noting that he has a 24-year-old son who does not believe that he will ever be able to buy a home.

"Today, I challenge you to think of this not so much as a crisis, but instead as an opportunity to change course, an opportunity to uplift individuals and families, and lead them down the path of self-sufficiency and self-sustainability," he added.

"An opportunity, if you will, to decrease the cost and increase the supply of safe, quality, affordable housing in our country. An opportunity to enact impactful, enduring policies."