

**CONGRESSMAN MATT GAETZ**  
**FLORIDA'S FIRST DISTRICT**



**NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 26, 2017

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**FEE SIMPLE BILL PASSES HOUSE**

WASHINGTON, DC: On Wednesday, July 26, the House passed H.R. 2370, the *Escambia County Land Conveyance Act*, by a voice vote. The bill, authored by Congressman Matt Gaetz (R-FL-01), gives leaseholders in Santa Rosa Island the option to acquire fee simple titles to their property.

In 1947, the federal government transferred land that was part of the Santa Rosa Island National Monument to Escambia County. Since then, residents of Santa Rosa Island have been ineligible to own their land; they can only lease it. At first, businesses and residents of Santa Rosa Island paid lease fees, but not property taxes. Since then, however, the rules changed; residents are now required to pay both lease fees and property taxes.

“For too long, residents of Santa Rosa Island have suffered unfair double taxation, and have been denied the ability to own their own land. My bill lifts the burden of double taxation, and restores the American Dream of property ownership,” said Congressman Gaetz.

H.R. 2370 would require Escambia County, within two years, to turn over to Santa Rosa County the land that it owns there, eliminating the longstanding confusion surrounding county land ownership. The bill also stipulates that the non-federal areas of Santa Rosa Island dedicated for conservation, preservation, public access, and parking will all be preserved in perpetuity. “Keeping Santa Rosa Island beautiful is extremely important to me, and this bill ensures it stays as pristine as ever,” said Rep. Gaetz. The Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners has announced it approves of the legislation.

The bill, which Rep. Gaetz called “a team effort on the part of federal, state, and local governments,” now moves to the Senate, where a companion bill has already been introduced by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL). “This is how legislation is supposed to work,” Rep. Gaetz said. “People have pushed change for years, and now that change is finally coming. I’m happy to have been able to serve the people of Santa Rosa Island.”

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