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"Finally, rural America has a voice again"

Secretary Zinke Weighs In on President Trump's Executive Order Directing Interior to Review of 20 Years of Monuments

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WASHINGTON – Today, at the Department of the Interior headquarters in Washington, D.C., President Donald J. Trump, accompanied by Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, signed the Antiquities Act Executive Order. The order directs Zinke to consult local governments and tribes in order to review national monuments created by the Antiquities Act since January 1, 1996, that are greater than 100,000 acres in footprint and report back to the President on suggested legislative or executive action, if applicable, within 120 days.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorizes the president to declare federal lands of historic or scientific value to be national monuments by designating the "smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected."

"The Interior is the steward of America's public lands. Part of being a good steward is being a good neighbor and being a good listener. In the Trump Administration, we listen and then we act," said Secretary Ryan Zinke. "For years, the people of Utah and other rural communities have voiced concern and opposition to some monument designations. But too often in recent history, exiting presidents make designations despite those concerns. And the acreage is increasing."

Since the 1900s, when the Act was first used, the average size of national monuments exploded from an average of 422 acres per monument. Now it's not uncommon for a monument to be more than a million acres.

The designations of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 1996 and the Bears Ears National Monument in 2016 are considered the book-ends of modern Antiquities Act overreach. Each monument is more than 1.3 million acres.

"Historically, the Act calls for the President to designate the 'smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected,'" Zinke continued. "Despite this clear directive 'smallest area' has become the exception and not the rule. Under the President's leadership, I will work with local, state and Tribal governments to review monument designations made the past 20 years and make sure they work for the local communities.

"The view from the Potomac is a lot different than the view from the Yellowstone or the Colorado. Too many times, you have people in D.C. who have never been to an area, never grazed the land, fished the river, driven the trails, or looked locals in the eye, who are making the decisions and they have zero accountability to the impacted communities. I'm interested in listening to those folks. That's what my team and I will be doing in the next few months."

What the Executive Order does do:

- The Executive Order directs the Department of the Interior to review monuments designated using the Antiquities Act as of January 1, 1996, that are in excess of 100,000 acres, or monuments that were expanded without adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders.
- This Executive Order restores trust between local communities and Washington and roots out abuses of power by previous administrations.
- This Executive Order puts America and the Department of the Interior back on track to manage our federal lands in accordance to traditional "multiple-use" philosophy by directing the Secretary of the Interior to make recommendations to the President on whether a monument should be rescinded, resized in order to better manage our federal lands.
- This Executive Order gives rural communities across America a voice and restores land use planning by directing the Secretary of the Interior to consult and coordinate with the Governors of States affected by monument designations or other relevant officials of affected State, Tribal, and local governments.

What the Executive Order doesn't do:

- This Executive Order does NOT strip any monument of a designation.
- This Executive Order does NOT loosen any environmental or conservation regulations on any land or marine areas.

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