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From: Small, Jeff
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Subject: Western Caucus Members Provide Thoughtful Comments for Zinke Monument Review
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Below is our press release.

To read the full letter and recommendations click [HERE](#).

Please thank the Secretary and your team for this review.

Let me know if you all have questions about any of our comments or recommendations.

Have a great holiday weekend.

Sincerely,

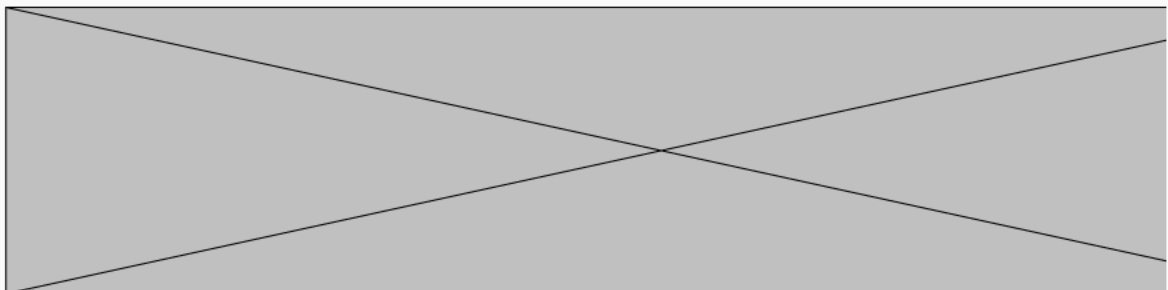
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For Immediate Release

Date:6/30/17

Contact: Jeff Small

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressional Western Caucus **Chairman Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04), Chairman Emeritus Steve Pearce (NM-02),** Western Caucus members **Rep. Andy Biggs (AZ-05), Rep. Trent Franks (AZ-08), Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-05) and Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), and Rep. Daniel Webster (FL-11)** released the following statements after sending a letter to **Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke** providing thoughtful and thorough comments on the 27 national monuments under review per **President Donald J. Trump’s** April 26, 2017 Executive Order:

“It speaks volumes that of the 27 monuments and 773.8 million acres currently under review, 14 monuments and more than 553.4 million acres were designated by the Obama Administration,” said **Chairman Gosar**. “With the stroke of a pen and the blind support of out-of-state extremist groups foaming at the mouth to lock up lands to serve their own agenda, President Obama trampled the will of the people and ignored the wisdom of local stakeholders. I am pleased to have been joined by my colleagues in sending this letter that helps give a voice to those who were often silenced over the last 20 years and provide helpful insight to Secretary Zinke as he conducts his review.”

“I am proud to join Chairman Paul Gosar in sending a letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke providing recommendations on the 27 monuments under review per President Trump’s Executive Order 13792,” said **Congressman Biggs**. “Four of these monuments are in our home state of Arizona. Most people do not realize that west of the Mississippi, there is very little private property ownership; most of the land is instead owned by the federal and state government. The Obama Administration compounded this problem by expanding the scope of the 1906 Antiquities Act, which led to massive land grabs and wrested millions of dollars in economic activity from western states. The 1906 Antiquities Act has also become the catalyst for radical environmentalist groups seeking to prevent Americans from having access to the nation’s natural resources. I am excited to partner with an administration that wants to work with the states, not against them. I look forward to Secretary Zinke’s revision of these monument designations.”

Congressman Pearce stated, “The last several Presidents have abused the Antiquities Act by creating expansive monuments that have disregarded input from local communities and governments who are affected the most by these designations. New Mexicans, and people across the nation, should be able to access federal lands for recreation, hunting, grazing, and the economic opportunity that comes with it. We all share the common goal of preserving the natural beauty we are blessed to have in the West, but responsible conservation has to consider how these actions affects the surrounding communities and local economies.”

“The Obama Administration abused and warped the original meaning of the 1906 Antiquities Act, with many designations exceeding one million acres in size. This was done without sufficient public outreach and coordination. I applaud Secretary Zinke’s review of this executive overreach and willingness to work with state and local stakeholders to ensure communities are not harmed by the designation of monuments,” said **Congressman Franks**.

Congressman Lamborn remarked, “In its original conception, the Antiquities Act was intended to protect ruins and artifacts on federal lands. Since then, the law has become another tool for federal overreach that allows the federal government to control large areas of land without any input from Congress. I am pleased to join many of my colleagues in the Western Caucus in this letter to Secretary Zinke. Our letter recommends that the Department of the Interior review monument designations—including marine monuments and several sites in the West. I believe that this review of monuments will allow for greater state control of fisheries and better management of our natural resources and recreation areas.”

“The Obama Administration abused the Antiquities Act more than any President in our nation’s history. In California and in other western states, federal land grabs have infringed on private property, made it more difficult for the federal government to manage the land, and decreased public access. I fully support the review of these monument designations by the Department of Interior to determine where adjustment is necessary – such as the Cascade Siskiyou Monument, which was expanded against the wishes of every county in the region. Eventually, we must reform the Antiquities act altogether to ensure that any federal land expansion occurs only with the support of Congress and those who live and work in the area,” said **Congressman LaMalfa**.

Congressman Webster stated, “President Obama’s administration abused the powers of the Antiquities Act with unprecedented monument designations that removed millions of acres of land from productive economic use and local control. Hundreds of millions of these acres included marine monuments in the Pacific; a similar future monument designation in the Gulf could destroy Florida’s tourist and fishing economy. I am encouraged that President Trump and Secretary Zinke are reviewing these Obama-era actions and urge them to take appropriate action to rescind or reduce many of these monument designations. We must work with the Trump administration to reform the Antiquities Act to prevent future abuse. I am confident we can find solutions that preserve and protect archeological sites, which is the purpose of the Antiquities Act, without harming our growing economy.”

Background:

Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Gosar (AZ-04) and Western Caucus Member Andy Biggs (AZ-05) led a letter signed by 17 Members of Congress providing thoughtful and thorough comments on the 27 national monuments currently under review by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke.

Signers of the letter include: Representatives Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (AS-AL), Mark Amodei (NV-02), Brian Babin (TX-36), Andy Biggs (AZ-05), Paul Cook (CA-08), Kevin Cramer (ND-AL), Blake Farenthold (TX-27), Trent Franks (AZ-08), Paul Gosar (AZ-04), Jody Hice (GA-10), Walter Jones (NC-03), Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), Doug Lamborn (CO-05), Tom McClintock (CA-04), Steve Pearce (NM-02), Randy Weber (TX-14) and Daniel Webster (FL-11).

The letter was endorsed by: the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and the Public Lands Council.

To read the full letter and recommendations click [HERE](#).

Based on the parameters of President Trump's April 2017 Executive Order Secretary Zinke announced in the [Federal Register](#) that his initial review will include 27 different land and marine monuments.

To read Western Caucus's press release about President Trump's April Executive Order on the Antiquities Act click [HERE](#).

The letter sent today is consistent with the Executive Order and Secretary's review and recommends the revision, and in some cases, rescission of national monuments unilaterally designated by presidents in the last 20 years that are larger than 100,000 acres and/or that lacked public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

It should come as no surprise that of those 27 designations and 773.8 million acres under review, 14 monuments and more than 553.4 million acres were withdrawn by the Obama Administration. In fact, President Obama abused the Antiquities Act more than any other president in history, designating or expanding 34 national monuments and locking-up 553.6 million acres of total land and water. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, past presidents have used this outdated authority to unilaterally designate 157 national monuments comprising "approximately 774 million acres, or about 92% of all monument acreage proclaimed since enactment of the Antiquities Act." The rest of the federal estate includes another 640 million acres.

This Antiquities Act was intended to protect prehistoric Indian ruins and artifacts on federal lands in the West and includes language to limit monument designations under this law to "the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects." Compared to the early application of the Antiquities Act, where the average size of a national monument was 422 acres, it became commonplace for President Obama's designated monuments to exceed one million acres in size.

Misuse of this outdated 1906 Act has jeopardized the daily activities, livelihoods and traditions of local communities. In numerous instances, grazing rights, water rights, energy development, wildfire prevention and other land management activities have been negatively impacted. These massive declarations have also resulted in restrictive land-use regulations that have limited hunting, fishing, OHV use and other recreational activities.

By going back to the drawing board and coordinating with state and local stakeholders, the Department of the Interior has an excellent opportunity to ensure communities are not harmed by the executive overreach of previous presidents and that these designations follow the spirit and letter of the law.

(Courtesy of the White House)

On April 26, 2017, President Trump issued Executive Order 13792, which directed the Department of the Interior to review monuments designated using the Antiquities Act since January 1, 1996, that are in excess of 100,000 acres, or that were expanded without adequate

public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders. The order does not strip any monument of a designation and does not loosen any environmental or conservation regulations on any land or marine areas.

Further, the Executive Order:

- Directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct the above-mentioned review.
- Directed the Secretary of the Interior to make recommendation to the President on whether a monument should be rescinded or resized.
- Directed the Secretary of the Interior to consult and coordinate with, as appropriate, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the heads of any other executive departments or agencies concerned with areas designated under the Act.
- Directed 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.
- Directed the Secretary of the Interior to provide an interim report to the President within 45 days of the date of the order.
- Directed the Secretary of the Interior to provide a final report to the President within 120 days of the date of the order.

Text of the Executive Order can be found [HERE](#).

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