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**Subject:** DCN: EST-00002809 - Antiquities Act - Katahdin Woods and Waters NM  
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**Attachments:** [2809 in.pdf](#)

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STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary of the Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It was an honor meeting you last month during President Trump's signing of the "Review of Designations under the Antiquities Act" Executive Order. This letter is in response to your May 12 letter requesting my input regarding the process that led to the designation of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument by former President Obama. Many Maine citizens and I are pleased that the Department of the Interior will conduct a formal review of this monument and analyze the significant opposition to the designation.

The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, which is comprised of about 87,500 non-contiguous acres of land just east of Baxter State Park in northern Maine, was a former working forest. The monument allows limited hunting opportunities on the lands east of the East Branch of the Penobscot River. Portions of the monument abut Maine's premier Baxter State Park. This state park is about 200,000 acres and includes Mt. Katahdin, which is over 5,200 feet in elevation.

As you know, the Antiquities Act was intended to be a tool to allow the president to protect areas that have "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, [or] other objects of historic or scientific interest." The law addresses the size of such protected areas by stating the land must be the "smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected." I have yet to see evidence the designation of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument by former President Obama was needed to protect any imminent threats to historical structures or objects. I believe the designation of this monument was not in accordance with the intent of the Antiquities Act.

Public opposition to the designation of this monument was quite significant, and it goes back years. The public became very concerned when the owners of the land tried to lobby Congress to make approximately 150,000 acres of land in northern Maine a national park. This troubled many people in Maine who rely on the forest product and outdoor recreational industries about the possibility of strict laws and rules imposed by the federal government if they owned land in this area of the state. In response to this, the 125<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature passed a bipartisan joint resolution in 2011 opposing the creation of a national park in northern Maine. In 2015, three municipalities located close to the proposed national park held non-binding votes to gauge local support: all three voted overwhelmingly against designation. East Millinocket voted 63% to 37% against, Medway voted 71% to 29% against, and Patten voted 70% to 30% against the national monument. I also made my position to President Obama very clear by writing to him and expressing my opposition to any federal control of this land.

With local, state and congressional delegation support lacking for the designation of a national park, the Quimby family then decided to lobby President Obama to use his unilateral power under the Antiquities Act to declare the area a national monument. The opposition to federal control of this land



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only intensified with this change in tactic. Former National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis visited northern Maine in early 2016 to hear directly from Maine citizens on this issue. He attended a public comment session in East Millinocket, where there were approximately 75 attendees. Only a few spoke in favor of the monument. The common theme of the opposition was that residents did not want the federal government in their back yard. Director Jarvis also held a public comment session in Orono, Maine, which is near Bangor. I was unable to attend due to a conflict, but staff from my office attended and delivered remarks in opposition to the proposal. Environmentalists used the opportunity to bus people from southern Maine up to testify. Opponents showed up in strong numbers on their own and gave specific reasons why they thought the monument was bad for Maine.

Director Jarvis's tone and words during this hearing made something clear, which many opponents already knew: the decision to designate this land as a monument had already been made, and there was nothing the opponents could do about it. Jarvis spoke about how the land was worthy of monument status, but did a poor job explaining how it differed from the other 17 million acres of forest land in the state. He also spoke about how important it is to have wealthy people supporting the National Park Service. It should be noted the Quimby family donated \$185,000 to the National Park Foundation from 2012 to 2014. At the conclusion of this public hearing, attendees knew it was just a matter of time before the President declared the land a monument.

As expected, on August 24, 2016 President Obama signed the proclamation to create the 87,500-acre Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Former President Obama clearly did not care about the concerns of his constituents, and he used his pen to appease wealthy, special interest groups. However, President Trump and your department have an opportunity to fix this injustice.

As you may know, the U.S. House Subcommittee on Federal Lands invited me to testify as a witness on May 2, 2017 for the "Examining the Consequences of Executive Branch Overreach of the Antiquities Act" hearing. During the hearing, I heard from two other witnesses who expressed similar concerns about the abuses of the Antiquities Act under former President Obama. I am hopeful that Congress will take these concerns into consideration and make positive reforms to the Antiquities Act.

I respectfully request to you and President Trump that the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine either be rescinded or managed by the State of Maine. The state has a better understanding of how to manage its own forests and knows what the needs are of our constituents and businesses.

Maine will be able to do a better job ensuring the health of the forest by sustainably harvesting timber, protecting the forests from forest fires and managing the spruce budworm, which will hit Maine in three to five years. As an example, National Interagency Fire Center statistics show that in 2016 the total number of fires in state jurisdictions was 40,705, compared to 27,038 fires in federal jurisdictions. However, the amount of state-jurisdiction acreage burned was just 1,678,538, compared to 3,831,457 acres burned under federal jurisdiction. With timber harvesting prohibited within Maine's national monument, the spruce budworm will devastate spruce and fir when it comes into full effect. If the state managed the land, we would use targeted harvesting to cut these species before the spruce budworm kills the trees. This will also support the local economy by providing logging jobs and feeding wood to our mills.

Recreation will also be improved if the state manages the land. The state would open all of the land with the exception of any land that may be subject to deed restrictions, and any areas determined by management planning to require special protection for recreational activities, such as hunting, snowmobiling and ATV use. I have attached a map that shows the amount of trails that were closed when

the Quimby family purchased the land. The state would immediately correct that poor decision and open as many of these trails as possible. These recreational industries are vital to our economy.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for taking the time to review the designation of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument under former President Obama. I have attached many supporting documents that clearly show the voices of the Governor, the Maine Legislature and our constituents were ignored in order to please wealthy, special interest groups who do not care about jobs and prosperity in our great country. I encourage you to carefully review this information and recommend to President Trump that the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument either be rescinded or managed by the State of Maine.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage  
Governor

CC: House Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
President Donald J. Trump  
Congressman Bruce Poliquin

Enclosure

# What Maine Has Lost

## Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument

