

From: Kaster, Amanda
To: [Randal Bowman](#)
Subject: Katadhin Monument Letters
Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 11:51:19 AM
Attachments: [Monument letter May 2017-Final\[2\].pdf](#)
[Rep Poliquin Letter to Sec Zinke - Katahdin Woods and Waters.pdf](#)

Please see attached.

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May 23, 2017

Monument Review

MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior
The White House
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to the attention of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine (PLC) that you are reviewing the recent designation of a national monument on more than 87,000 acres of what had been privately owned land in northern Maine. We are writing to you to express our opinion on the process that led up to the declaration of this property as a National Monument as well as to provide some evidence of recent issues that are having an impact upon our industry which should be incorporated in your review process.

The private land owner in question, Elliotsville Plantation Inc. (EPI), for years made clear a desire to donate land in the Katahdin Region of Maine to the federal government to establish a national park and a national recreation area, which would have required an act of Congress. In order to bypass this obstacle - which would likely have doomed the effort due to strong opposition in the region - EPI instead sought a monument designation which required only presidential approval through the utilization of the Antiquities Act. In August of last year, after what many opponents considered a "token" process of review and hearings by the National Park Service, President Barack Obama designated the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

The PLC is a trade association that represents logging and trucking contractors in the state of Maine. Our membership employs nearly 2,500 people and is responsible for about 75% of Maine's annual timber harvest. The economic impact of our industry was more than \$880 million in 2014 and it was also responsible for the employment of over 7,000 people.

While the PLC has a deep respect for the rights of private landowners, we also believe it is their responsibility to act in ways that do not harm the livelihoods of their neighbors. The PLC was very disappointed that EPI made so little effort to embrace the importance of timber harvesting to forest health in the region, or to ensure that it will remain a viable industry alongside their land, either prior to the declaration of the monument or thereafter.

The PLC attempted to work with EPI on several occasions prior to the monument declaration to educate their leadership on the value of timber harvesting and sustainable forest management. We also provided suggestions for how any type of federal declaration could incorporate sustainable timber management and act as an educational showpiece to the world. EPI was willing to listen, but never was willing to embrace how a federal declaration could not only co-exist with forest management, but champion its ethos. This was a shortsighted decision and not one that embraces the history or current participation of timber harvesting in this region both now and in the future. This is also one of the principle reasons why our organization was so disappointed with the process that led up to the declaration of this monument.

As an association representing the interests of loggers in the state of Maine, we must weigh the ramifications of the national monument on the industry we represent – an industry which has a long and proud tradition in Maine and in the region in question, and which today provides some of the best jobs remaining in that same region. We are extremely concerned that President Obama’s unilateral action to designate a national monument will do serious harm to Maine’s logging industry, resulting in both short term and long term lasting effects. Nothing we have seen since the designation of the monument has eased those concerns, rather we are seeing our fears about its effects confirmed.

Maine loggers working in the region depend on private landowners, access to existing roads and right-of-ways, and stable regulations to operate safely and cost-effectively. All these things are jeopardized now that the land in question has become federally owned.

Equally troubling, the designation of this national monument serves to discourage future investment in the forest products industry in the area, not least because the drive to establish it relied heavily on creating the impression that the industry is dead or dying and a national monument is the only viable economic alternative to replace it. This is simply false.

From wood-based construction materials for high rise building, to wood pellets, to liquid biofuels, to composite fiber products, new uses for wood fiber have emerged in recent years and will continue to do so. Locally sourced timber to supply these emerging industries is critical to the future economic viability of the region, as are the existence of logging contractors to harvest and transport that timber. We are already seeing investments not only by our existing sawmills and paper mills, but by new wood fiber exporters and composite fiber industries in our state. Given time, the combination of Maine’s wood basket – the largest in the Northeast – and the availability of a proven and experienced logging and trucking workforce will lead to even more investments here. We cannot afford to continue the national monument supporters’ mantra that the forest economy is dead, and tourism is the answer to replace it.

While discouraging investment is a long-term concern, safety is an immediate one to our members working in this region. These contractors must now share private logging roads with tourists – many of whom are unfamiliar with working timber harvests – on roads never designed for such dual use and lacking the signage, infrastructure and improvements to deal with it. The increased costs and liabilities of this situation are significant for contractors working on land leading to and adjacent to the monument. We have already received reports of issues; in one case a contractor reported a passenger vehicle drove underneath a working stroke delimeter on a logging road near the monument, and truckers are reporting increasing risk from passenger vehicles sharing the roads with them. Accidents are inevitable in this situation, and the general public’s cohabitation with logging jobs, if not properly managed, will increase contractor’s costs, lower productivity, and limit their access to the region.

The PLC has attempted to address issues including safety and access with the National Park Service in meetings that began last fall. Initially, we felt progress was being made, with all major stakeholders represented and input being gathered for a collective action plan. Then communication idled over the winter, and this spring we learned the NPS had elected to proceed with its own plans without consulting us. Loggers and truckers were not represented. This heavy-handed federal approach to handling the concerns of communities and businesses in the region is exactly the kind of treatment opponents of the monument have feared.

Many of the citizens living in the region share our concerns and remain opposed to the federal government establishing its footprint in the area. More than 220 Maine businesses that employ more than 5,000 Mainers, many in the logging, trucking, saw mill, and other forest products industries, announced their opposition to federal ownership of the land, largely because they believed this would hurt their businesses and prevent future investment and job creation. While we have seen media stories about some former opponents now changing their stance, our own membership and our many partners in the forest products industry remain overwhelmingly opposed to the monument.

For all these reasons, we propose that the monument designation either be repealed or we would propose the following changes:

- A new management plan for the monument land should allow for timber harvesting. The new monument could be one of only two properties in the park system (the other is Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park in Vermont <https://www.nps.gov/mabi/learn/management/forest-management.htm>) to allow timber harvesting, educating the general public on forestry and timber harvesting, celebrating timber harvesting as part of the history of the region and providing a showcase to the world as to why timber harvesting is important for the health and sustainability of our forests. If this is not possible within the existing National Park System, then perhaps the designation should be changed to a National Forest, where timber harvesting is consistently encouraged.
- The impact of the National Monument on access and impacts to private landowners for trucking and harvesting operations should be limited.
- Planning for safety and the cohabitation of active timber harvesting with the general public on a private road system where log trucks have the right of way must be made an immediate priority, and all access to the monument restricted until such time as a proper plan can be created with input from loggers and truckers. Additional near misses such as those which have occurred recently must be prevented.
- Cost increases and productivity decreases of timber harvesting as a result of the general public's transportation and interest in harvesting operations must be avoided.

While it is true our members are professional loggers with important business interests in the region, none have chosen to live and work in Maine for financial reasons alone. Most are outdoors enthusiasts with a strong respect for the woods that have chosen logging because they grew up in the business and/or can imagine no better place to work. They are not the enemy of Maine's forests but rather some of its strongest allies. They work in an industry that is sustainable and important for forest health, and most hope their children will have the same opportunity to do so for generations to come.

Supporters of a national monument may be under the illusion that the monument is located in a pristine wilderness of old growth trees and undisturbed acreage. In fact, the land and most of the region have been working forests for generations. The beauty people see there today is a result of responsible forest management and logging. Far from destroying the forests, loggers are part of this responsible management. Preserving Maine's forests as "working forests" is the best way to ensure their protection and health for future generations.

In closing, the PLC would like to thank you for your attention to this important matter and for listening to our concerns. We hope you will carefully weigh those concerns and the many others expressed by Maine's Congressional Delegation, Maine's citizens and businesses in the region as you consider this issue.

If you have questions or would like to visit an active timber harvest in this region of Maine, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dana A. Doran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dana" and last name "Doran" clearly distinguishable.

Dana Doran
Executive Director