

March 20, 2024

Representative Bruce Westerman, Chairman  
Representative Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: H.R. 5499, Congressional Oversight of the Antiquities Act**

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our millions of members across the country, we are writing to express our unwavering support for the Antiquities Act of 1906 and our strong opposition to H.R. 5499, the “*Congressional Oversight of the Antiquities Act*,” which poses a significant threat to this bedrock conservation law.

Since its enactment, the Antiquities Act has been one of our nation’s most critical conservation tools for preserving public lands, waters and cultural sites. Our national parks and monuments and other protected public lands and waters unite all people in this country by protecting our shared heritage for future generations to enjoy. Since it was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act has been used on a bipartisan basis by 18 Presidents (nine Republicans and nine Democrats) to protect America’s most iconic natural, scientific, cultural, and historic places, including the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, Fort Monroe, the Pacific Remote Islands, and Acadia, Zion and Olympic National Parks.

Furthermore, national monuments poll very well with voters across party lines. Per the Colorado College’s 2024 Conservation in the West Poll, 85% of westerners support creating new national parks and monuments to protect historic sites and areas for recreation. The sheer diversity of historic, cultural, and natural treasures that have been protected by the Antiquities Act is the reason why hundreds of groups representing sportsmen, cultural heritage organizations, evangelicals, conservation, recreation businesses, historic preservation, and many others all oppose efforts to undermine this vital law.

H.R. 5499 represents a direct assault on the Antiquities Act. The legislation would forcibly sunset national monument designations while limiting future designations, which blatantly undercuts the original intent of the Antiquities Act to protect places at urgent risk. It would also undermine the meaningful Tribal engagement at the center of many modern designation efforts, disregarding the sovereignty and expertise of indigenous communities whose cultural heritage and ancestral lands are often central to monument designations. Finally, Congress already has the power to pass legislation creating, revoking or modifying national monuments on a case-by-case basis.

As organizations committed to conservation, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of our nation's heritage, we urge you to oppose H.R. 5499 and to uphold the Antiquities Act as a critical tool for protecting America's natural and cultural treasures.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We trust that you will consider the long-term implications of H.R. 5499 and stand in defense of the Antiquities Act.

Sincerely,

Accountable.US  
Alaska Wilderness League  
Azul  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
CalWild  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks  
Colorado Wildlands Project  
Conservation Colorado  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
Conservation Northwest  
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
EarthKeepers 360  
Earthworks  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC  
Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks  
Friends of the Earth US  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
GreenLatinos  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
HECHO  
Institute for a Progressive Nevada  
John Muir Project  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce

League of Conservation Voters  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Marine Conservation Institute  
Mountain Mamas  
Mystic Aquarium  
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation  
National Ocean Protection Coalition  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Wildlife Federation  
Native Voters Alliance Nevada  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nevada Wildlife Federation  
New Mexico Wild  
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness  
Nuestra Tierra  
Ocean Defense Initiative  
Oregon League of Conservation Voters  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Plaquemines Rising Coastal Restoration  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Protect Our Winters  
Sierra Club  
Silvix Resources  
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
The Mountain Pact  
The Wilderness Society  
Trust for Public Land  
Tuleyome  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Vet Voice Foundation  
Western Watersheds Project  
WildEarth Guardians