

April 8, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the following organizations and the millions of Americans that comprise our members nationwide, we write in support of the Antiquities Act. This law is a critical tool for the conservation and preservation of our nation's public lands and as such *we encourage you to oppose any legislation to reduce your authority under the Antiquities Act and to appropriately utilize this tool* to continue the long bipartisan practice of Presidents recognizing and protecting our rich natural and cultural heritage. With the exception of the Organic Act of 1916, no law has had more influence over the development of the modern National Park System than the Antiquities Act.

Recent legislative initiatives that aim to restrict the President's authority to create National Monuments under auspices of the Antiquities Act would diminish the President's ability to protect "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States." Since the passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906, fifteen Presidents have used the Act to designate 124 National Monuments. Most recently, President George W. Bush used the authority granted in the Act to designate more than 139,000 square miles surrounding the Northwest Hawaiian Islands as the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the largest national monument ever created.

The Antiquities Act mandates appropriate roles for both the President and Congress in the protection of important federal land values. It allows the President to act quickly to protect important objects and values on our public lands. Congress retains the ability to designate National Monuments legislatively, change monument boundaries, direct resources for monument management, re-designate monuments as national parks and even abolish monuments.

Our National Monuments inspire, amaze, educate and entrance over 50 million visitors annually. Monuments form the cornerstones of the National Park and National Landscape Conservation Systems.

The conservation and preservation communities support the Antiquities Act and the important authority it grants to all presidents. As we recently marked the first anniversary of the passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act, we strongly support continuing utilizing both innovative and tried and true measures to leave a public lands legacy for our children. The Antiquities Act is a critical tool for the conservation of our nation's public lands and as such we encourage you, not only to defend against any efforts to weaken presidential authority under the Act, but to appropriately utilize that authority by joining the long bipartisan list of Presidents,

from Theodore Roosevelt to George W. Bush, who have protected important natural and cultural sites under the Act.

Sincerely,

Jessica Verges, President
Alaska Association for Historic Preservation

Cindy Shogan, Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Barbara Dobson, President
Alliance for Historic Wyoming

Damon Dozier, Director of Public Affairs
American Anthropological Association

Gregory A. Miller, Ph.D., President
American Hiking Society

Rebecca Wodder, President
American Rivers

Linea Sundstrom, Chair
American Rock Art Research Association

C. Brian Rose, President
Archaeological Institute of America

Jon M. Shumaker
Arizona Archaeological Council

Jeff Williamson, President
Arizona Zoological Society

Delaine Spilsbury, Director
Bristlecone Alliance

Mike Painter, Coordinator
Californians for Western Wilderness

Cathy Garrett, ASLA, President
California Preservation Foundation

John Podesta, President
Center for American Progress Action Fund

William H. Doelle, President and CEO
Center for Desert Archaeology

Carolyn Campbell, Executive Director
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

Erik M. Gantt, President
Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists

Brian O'Donnell, Executive Director
Conservation Lands Foundation

Deborah Gangloff, Ph. D., President and CEO
Crow Canyon Archaeology Center

Rodger Schlickeisen, President & CEO
Defenders of Wildlife

Delaine Spilsbury, Board of Directors
Great Basin Water Network

Glenda Simmons, Acting President
Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument

Buford Crites, President of the Board
Friends of the Desert Mountains

Paul McFarland, Executive Director
Friends of the Inyo

Nancy Hall, President
Friends of Gold Butte

Lahsha Brown, Executive Director
Friends of Ironwood Forest

Pat Williams, President
Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Bill James, Executive Director
Friends of Sloan Canyon

Thomas Hulen, Executive Director
Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument

Kelly Burke, Executive Director
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council

Rick Johnson, Executive Director
Idaho Conservation League

Tiernan Sittenfeld, Legislative Director
League of Conservation Voters

Craig Sharpe, Executive Director
Montana Wildlife Federation

Thomas C. Kiernan, President
National Parks Conservation Association

Adam Kolton, Senior Director, Congressional and
Federal Affairs
National Wildlife Federation

John C. Tull, Ph.D., Conservation Director
Nevada Wilderness Project

Stephen Capra, Executive Director
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Katherine Finley, Executive Director
Organization of American Historians

Gary Werner, Executive Director
Partnership for the National Trails System

David Jenkins, Vice President for Government and
Political Affairs
Republicans for Environmental Protection

Leonard Becker, President
Sacred Sites International

Debbie Sease, Legislative Director
Sierra Club

Margaret W. Conkey, President
Society for American Archaeology

Dave Willis, Chair
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council

Dennis Tighe, President
Friends of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National
Monument

Patrick Shea, Executive Director
Grand Staircase Partners

Patty Gerstenblith, President
Lawyers' Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Bob Witzeman, Conservation Chair
Maricopa Audubon Society

Mike Daulton, Senior Director, Government Relations
National Audubon Society

Richard Moe, President
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Frances Beinecke, President
Natural Resources Defense Council

William Doleman, President
New Mexico Archaeological Council

Brent Fenty, Executive Director
Oregon Natural Desert Association

Adam Cramer, General Counsel
Outdoor Alliance

Susan Tixier, Field Director
People United For Parks

Lynsey Miller, Executive Director
Rincon Institute

Megan Graham, Executive Director
San Juan Citizens Alliance

Melanie Emerson, Executive Director
Sky Island Alliance

William B. Lees, Ph.D., President
Society for Historical Archaeology

Luther Propst, Executive Director
Sonoran Institute

Scott Groene, Executive Director
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Kevin Bixby, Executive Director
Southwest Environmental Center

Andrew Fulks, President
Tuleyome

Herbert D. Trossman, President, Board of Directors
Tucson Audubon Society

John Horning, Executive Director
WildEarth Guardians

Bill Meadows, President
The Wilderness Society

cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture