

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

March 25, 2015

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Amendment No. 338, Deficit-Neutral Reserve Fund Relating to the Designation of National Monuments

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid,

Outdoor Alliance writes to share our perspectives regarding Senator Daines's amendment, No. 338, Deficit-Neutral Reserve Fund Relating to the Designation of National Monuments, proposing to lay the groundwork for future attacks on the Antiquities Act of 1906, a land management tool that has been invaluable for managing and protecting outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands and their significant economic contributions to nearby communities. We completely agree that local input on any new designation is not merely important, but should be effectively a condition precedent for use of the Antiquities Act. However, a budget measure aimed at obstructing use of this long standing statute has the potential to undermine the demonstrated economic benefit to local and regional economies when the Antiquities Act is used wisely.

Outdoor Alliance, a coalition of six member-based organizations, including Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, and the Mountaineers, represents the interests of the millions of Americans who hike, paddle, climb, mountain bike, and backcountry ski on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes. Collectively, Outdoor Alliance has members in all fifty states and a network of local clubs and advocacy groups across the nation.

Over the course of more than a century, nearly every president from each political party has employed the Antiquities Act to protect treasured places on America's public lands. While the Act is dedicated to protection of areas of historic or scientific significance, protection of outdoor recreation opportunities has been among the Act's valuable additional benefits, and among the National Monuments designated under the Act are



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many areas that went on to become crown jewels of the National Parks System, including the Grand Canyon and Jackson Hole (now Grand Teton National Park).

Recently, the Act has been used to help ensure access to outdoor recreation for underserved urban communities through designation of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument in Southern California, and used to protect and advance the outdoor recreation economy and important conservation values in Colorado through designation of the Browns Canyon National Monument. These designations reflect the painstaking work of local communities to protect the myriad values provided by these landscapes.

National Monuments designated under the Antiquities Act are home to truly world class destinations for outdoor recreation. Devils Tower in Wyoming, the very first area designated under the Act, draws climbers from around the world to its unique geology and outstanding crack climbing. Joshua Tree in California, redesignated as a National Park in 1994, is one of the most valued areas for rock climbing in the country, originally protected by the Act.

In Colorado, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison (originally a National Monument, redesignated as a National Park in 1999) offers paddlers one of the finest whitewater multiday trips in the U.S., in addition to drawing climbers to some of the longest routes in the country.

In California, Fort Ord National Monument contains more than 80 miles of trails for mountain bikers and hikers, and the area is home to the Sea Otter Classic, an event often regarded as the world's premiere bicycle festival, which draws more than 9,000 competitors and 55,000 spectators annually, contributing over \$19 million to the local economy.

Among the most recent designations under the Antiquities Act, the San Juan Islands National Monument in Washington offers one of the most outstanding sea kayaking experiences anywhere, with views of snow-capped peaks and abundant wildlife, including the best killer whale watching in the country.

Far from taking lands out of productive economic use, designations under the Antiquities Act are a proven economic driver for near-by communities. Studies repeatedly demonstrate that outdoor recreation opportunities, parks, and open space increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property, and that counties in the West with protected public lands like National Monuments are more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and grow more quickly than counties without



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public lands.¹ In California alone, outdoor recreation accounts for 732,000 jobs and generates \$85.4 billion in consumer spending and \$6.7 billion in state and local tax revenue annually.² A recent series of studies analyzing the economies of communities adjacent to 17 National Monuments designated since 1982 found that key economic indicators all improved or maintained following designation, and in no case did designation lead to or coincide with an economic downturn.³

Please support the continued judicious use of this important protection and management tool by opposing amendment No. 338.

Best regards,

Adam Cramer
Executive Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc:

Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Michael Van Abel, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Martinique Grigg, Executive Director, The Mountaineers

¹ See, e.g., HEADWATERS ECONOMICS, FORT ORD'S PUBLIC LANDS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 2 (2012).

² OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: TAKE IT OUTSIDE FOR CALIFORNIA JOBS AND A STRONG ECONOMY (2012).

³ HEADWATERS ECONOMICS, SUMMARY: THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES (2012).

