

December 13, 2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom McClintock  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
Washington, D.C 20515

**OPPOSE H.R. 4558, Grand Staircase-Escalante Enhancement Act**

Dear Chairmen Bishop and McClintock, and Ranking Members Grijalva and Hanabusa:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to urge you to oppose H.R. 4558, the Grand Staircase-Escalante Enhancement Act.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is a wild, desert landscape of narrow slot canyons, strange hoodoos, desert oases, and a multitude of opportunities for recreation and solitude. Since it was first protected 21 years ago, it has yielded an abundance of groundbreaking paleontological discoveries, and reinvigorated the surrounding communities.

Far from enhancing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, this bill would double down on the illegal and publicly opposed action that President Trump took last week when he shrank the monument by nearly half, dividing it into three smaller and separate units.

The actions last week to rollback protections for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument were overwhelmingly opposed by the public. Over 2.8 million Americans commented with more than 99% supporting keeping existing national monuments intact, including 91% of Utahns who submitted comments.

The goal of H.R. 4558 is to enshrine this massive rollback and the new monument units—called Escalante Canyons, Kaiparowits, and Grand Staircase, respectively. The language of the bill nullifies Trump’s proclamation, but the monuments it enacts exactly match the 48 percent reduction of the original Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument perpetrated last week by President Trump’s Executive Order.

The bill also creates the so-called “Escalante Canyons National Park and Preserve,” but this designation is a National Park in name only by making the purposes of the park out of line with decades of National Park Service precedent. It also would place important management planning decisions for that park and the three national monuments in the hands of local officials in Kane and Garfield County. Passing this legislation would dangerously further the effort to turn control over federal public lands to state and private interests, and would set a terrible precedent for management of federal lands.

All of the new designations prioritize recreation, hunting and grazing over conservation, a management vision not in keeping with the standard practices and priorities of the National Park Service, the mission of which is to, “[preserve] unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” Unfortunately, there

is also no publicly available map, so it is impossible to know what the true implications of the creation of this so-called National Park would be.

This legislation ensures that the lands removed from Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument would no longer be protected by a mineral withdrawal; includes a public lands giveaway, handing the Hole in the Rock Road to the State of Utah; and will likely reopen destructive off-road vehicle routes that were closed to protect sensitive resources.

Finally, this bill would hurt local businesses which depend on Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument for their livelihoods and local economies. Nearly 600 businesses and local chambers of commerce signed a letter opposing changes to existing national monuments – including the Escalante & Boulder Chamber of Commerce and dozens of Utah businesses. This bill flies in the face of local businesses which depend on the national monument to drive tourism and protect outdoor recreation and quality of life.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 4558 when it comes before your committee this week.

Thank you,

Acadia Institute of Oceanography  
Alaska Wilderness League  
American Whitewater  
Arizona Wilderness Coalition  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Central Colorado Coalition  
Church of Bell Meadow  
City of Cannon Beach - Haystack Rock Awareness Program  
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks  
Conejos Clean Water  
Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship  
Desert Wildlife Consultants, LLC  
Dolores River Boating Advocates  
Earthjustice  
Earthworks  
EcoLogical Solutions, Inc.  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Escalante & Boulder Chamber of Commerce  
Friends of Browns Canyon  
Friends of Gold Butte  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Gathering Waters, Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts  
Geos Institute  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Northern San Juan chapter  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness- Roaring Fork Broadband  
Great Salt Lake Audubon  
Hassayampa Forestry & Ecological, LLC  
High Country Conservation Advocates

Hip Hop Caucus  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce  
Marine Conservation Institute  
Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance (MESA)  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nevada Conservation League  
Ocean Conservation Research  
Pacific Environment  
Partnership for Responsible Business  
Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
Ruris  
Salt Lake Indivisible  
San Juan Citizens Alliance  
Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce  
Save Our Shores  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Forest Legacy  
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council  
The Lands Council  
The Moore Charitable Foundation  
Western Watershed Project  
Western Wildlife Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
Wild Utah Project  
Umpqua Watersheds, Inc.  
Utah Diné Bikéyah  
Utah Indivisible  
Vet Voice Foundation