

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 24, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

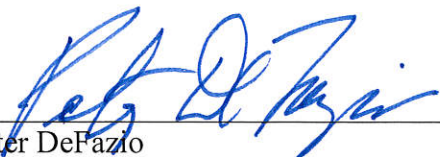
We are writing in response to your recent comments about the Antiquities Act and your ongoing commitment to conservation and historic preservation on Federal land. Only Congress has the authority to establish National Parks, Forests, and wilderness areas, but there is a long tradition of the conservation initiatives spearheaded by the President. Since the 1906 passage of the Antiquities Act, Presidents have had the authority to establish National Monuments. This is an important tool that has led to the protection of some of our most iconic landscapes and valuable cultural resources, including the Grand Canyon and the recently enacted Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument. Some initiatives require Presidential leadership and should not be bogged down by political infighting and paralysis, increasingly common characteristics of Congress.

In today's deeply partisan environment, it's becoming nearly impossible for Congress to make critical conservation decisions. The 112<sup>th</sup> Congress was the first Congress in 40 years that failed to permanently protect any of America's treasured landscapes. The current Congress is on a path to repeat that abysmal record. There are 37 land designation bills sitting before Congress that have broad public support. Unfortunately, Congress is failing to act. The House Natural Resources Committee has only held hearings on 8 of these proposals and only one has moved beyond markup and passed the House. With only 121 legislative days scheduled for 2014, the time to act is running out. Many of these proposals are excellent candidates for an Antiquities Act designation by the President.

On April 16, 2013, the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation held a hearing on a suite of bills designed to dilute the Presidential authority outlined in the Antiquities Act. The theme of the hearing was overreach with a strong emphasis placed on the need to make the National Monument process more inclusive by requiring Congressional approval. As you know, Congress already has the opportunity to take the lead but is choosing to shun this role. Conservation and historic preservation initiatives with broad public support should not have to be sidelined or stalled because of political paralysis. Gateway communities throughout the country benefit from Federal conservation efforts; resources are protected, visitor experience is enhanced, and local economies are enhanced. At National Parks alone, visitors spend more than \$35 million per day. Our most significant resources deserve our attention.

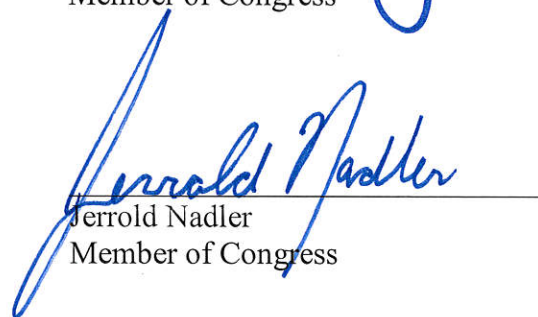
Again, we are encouraged by your enthusiasm, and we look forward to your leadership to help identify appropriate sites for conservation and preservation. When Congress is unable to advance conservation legislation, the importance of the Antiquities Act is increasingly apparent.

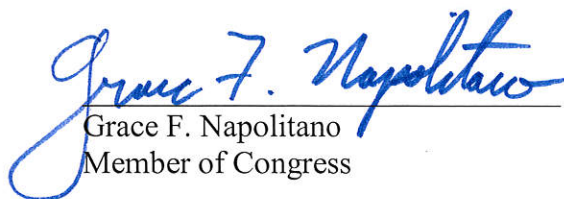
Sincerely,

  
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

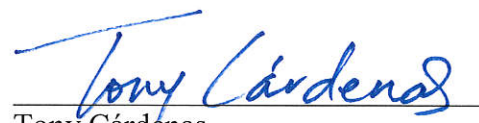
  
Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

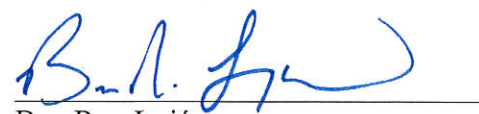
  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

  
Lucille Royal-Allard  
Member of Congress

  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

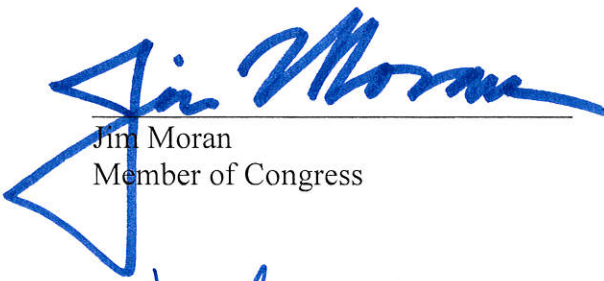
  
Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

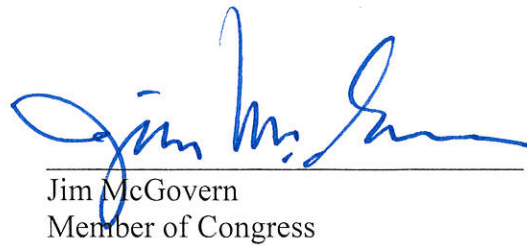
  
Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

  
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Jim Moran  
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern  
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Jared Huffman  
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Sam Farr  
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Tim Walz  
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Niki Tsongas  
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
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Gerry Connolly  
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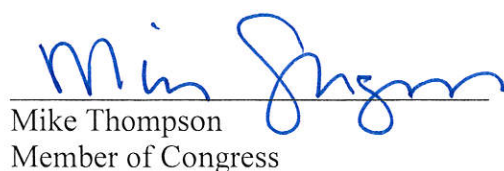
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Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress




Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Mike Honda  
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Suzan DelBene  
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Bill Keating  
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Mike Quigley  
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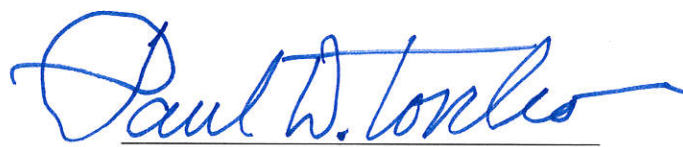
  
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Kathy Castor  
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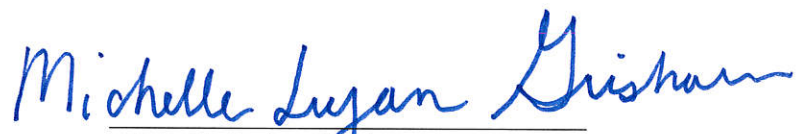
  
Adam Schiff  
Member of Congress


  
Dan Lipinski  
Member of Congress

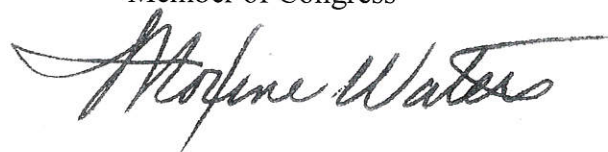
  
Suzanne Bonamici  
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Matt Cartwright  
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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

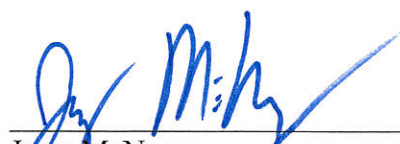
  
Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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Chris Van Hollen  
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John Lewis  
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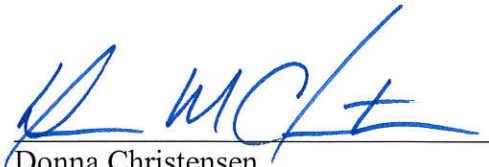
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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



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Donna Christensen  
Member of Congress



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



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John Sarbanes  
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Mark Takano  
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Joe Garcia  
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Steve Cohen  
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Brad Schneider  
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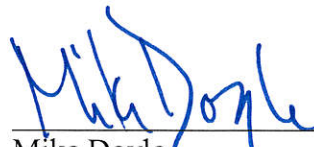
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John Delaney  
Member of Congress



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Raul Ruiz  
Member of Congress



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Mike Doyle  
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Doris Matsui  
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Pete P. Gallego  
Member of Congress





Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



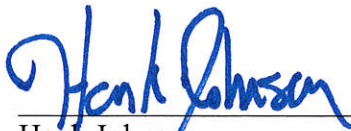
Bruce Braley  
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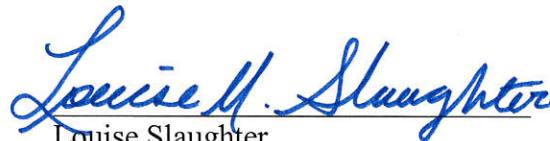
Dan Maffei  
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Tim Bishop  
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Ann McLane Kuster  
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Louise Slaughter  
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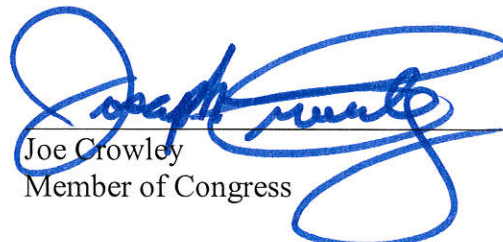
Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

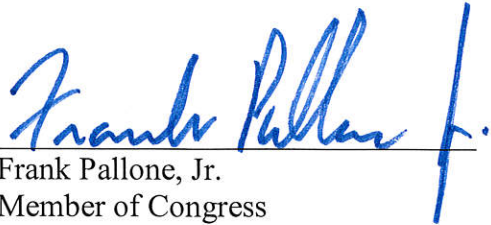


George Miller  
Member of Congress



Joe Crowley  
Member of Congress

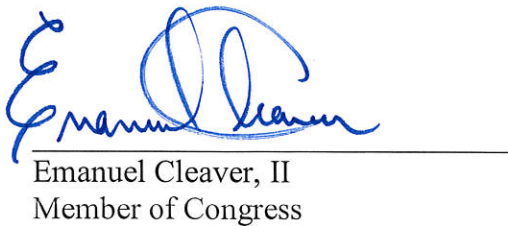


  
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Jackie Speier  
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Elizabeth Esty  
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Scott Peters  
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

  
Michael E. Capuano  
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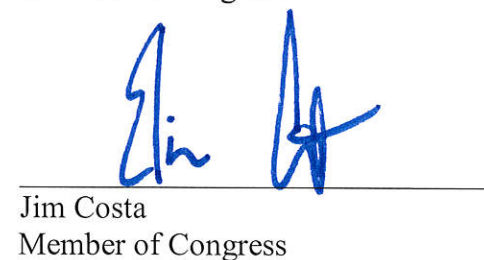
  
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Jim Costa  
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Frederica Wilson  
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