

ANTIQUITIES ACT

October 2016

THE SITUATION



The Antiquities Act authorizes the president to designate national monuments on existing federal land. Since its enactment in 1906, it has been used to protect some of our nation's most iconic historical landmarks and natural landscapes, from the Grand Canyon in Arizona to the Stonewall Inn in New York City.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

National monuments preserve and protect our most cherished natural and cultural resources. The Antiquities Act allows the president to protect places for future generations in a manner that honors our shared heritage and respects our commitment to sustainable land management. Despite this historic function, Republicans in Congress are eager to dismantle and restrict the Antiquities Act.

WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

President Obama has used the Antiquities Act numerous times throughout his term to help protect some of our nation's most sensitive landscapes and diversify the story enshrined in our public lands. Most recently, President Obama enlarged the **Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument** in the water of Hawaii, making it one of the the largest protected marine reserves in the world, and designated the **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument** in Northern Maine. He has also designated monuments to honor and reflect the history of diverse communities, including the **Cesar Chavez National Monument** in California and the **Stonewall National Monument** in New York City.

THE FACTS

80% of respondents **support the president's use of the Antiquities Act** to designate national monuments on federal land, according to a Colorado College Poll

16/19 presidents since 1906, **both Democrats and Republicans, have used the Antiquities Act**

WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

Nothing. That is both the problem and the reason why the Antiquities Act is so important - it allows the president to protect special places even when political discord divides Congress. House Republicans have ignored 20 out of 24 national monument and other conservation designation bills introduced this Congress, while at the same time crying foul each time the president designates a nation monument. Republicans have even gone as far as introducing legislation to place geographic restrictions and other administrative hurdles on use of the Antiquities Act.



Democrats fully support the Antiquities Act and are working with President Obama to make sure our most treasured resources receive the protection they deserve.



House Republicans want to dismantle the Antiquities Act and stop the president's authority to designate new national monuments.

HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

Instead of trying to obstruct publicly supported conservation designations, **Congress needs to do a better job of examining proposed national monuments and other conservation designations** by, at the very least, holding hearings on introduced bills.