



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

NOV 10 2011

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The enclosed report highlights some of the diverse areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that I believe should be considered for congressional designation as national conservation areas or wilderness areas. We have compiled this list of special lands based on input and encouragement from members of Congress, state and county officials, our own land managers, and other interested parties. In all cases, the highlighted areas have significant local support.

This report provides you with a brief introduction to 18 special areas in 9 different states. This is not a complete accounting of public lands that deserve congressional attention. It is a preliminary report that has been generated through the leadership of Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes, BLM Director Bob Abbey, and their staffs. We look forward to continue working with all stakeholders to identify additional areas of BLM lands that deserve protection.

For broader context, the BLM currently manages over 245 million acres of land nationwide, but primarily in the 12 western states. Since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, Congress has designated approximately 8,700,000 acres of BLM land as wilderness. This equates to roughly 3.5 percent of the land the BLM manages.

These conservation lands play a critical role in keeping local economies healthy and active. Recent reports suggest that outdoor recreation and conservation efforts generate as much as \$1 trillion in annual economic activity, support more than 6.4 million jobs, and provide tens of billions of dollars in local, state, and Federal tax revenue. These are significant contributions that can be further amplified through congressional protection of our most critical areas.

It is my sincere hope that the Senate and the House of Representatives will take action on the proposals found in this report, and other deserving conservation efforts, before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is important that we strike a balance that protects our Nation's special lands at the same time that we are initiating major new renewable energy

projects on public lands, keeping our Nation's oil and gas development opportunities robust, and providing critical minerals and other development-focused uses of our public lands.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ken Salazar in black ink.

Ken Salazar

Enclosure



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**NOV 10 2011**

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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