

United States Congress

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November 13, 2013

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OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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

Dear Secretary Jewell,

Like you, we are committed to appropriate conservation and multiple-use management of our public lands. As elected officials, we are working closely with our constituents on efforts to improve public land management—which often include conservation designations. Given the gravity and permanence of national monuments, we believe that should these decisions be necessary, they should be made by Congress in an open, transparent, and public manner using extraordinary caution.

On October 31, 2013, during remarks at the National Press Club regarding the Antiquities Act, you said, “if Congress doesn’t step up to act to protect some of these important places that have been identified by communities and people throughout the country, then the president will take action...there’s no question that if Congress doesn’t act, we will.”

In light of this statement, we are requesting a comprehensive list of the “important places” you reference in your comments that the administration is considering for national monument designations, along with a proposed timeline. Additionally, we are seeking clarification of whether designations are being considered only for proposed national monuments or whether there are other land-use proposals the administration would consider making monuments absent Congressional action. We also request that the administration notify all members of a state’s congressional delegation at least 90-days in advance of designating a monument within that particular state.

We believe that these requests are consistent with your repeated commitment to openness, transparency, and cooperation with local and state officials in the context of land management decisions. Especially in consideration

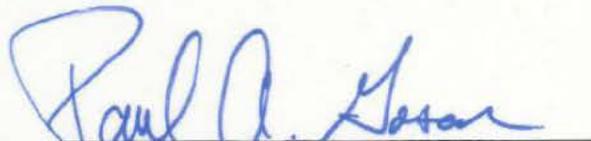
of past controversial usage of the Antiquities Act, your statements at the National Press Club have the potential to unravel the good work done by many to develop bottom-up land management solutions. Clarification of those statements is therefore critical to the continued success of these grassroots initiatives.

We want to reaffirm our belief that public lands designations should originate in local communities where the concept enjoys broad support from elected officials, stakeholders, and other impacted individuals. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward receiving your response in the near future.

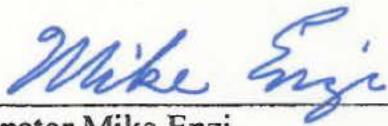
Sincerely,



Senator Dean Heller



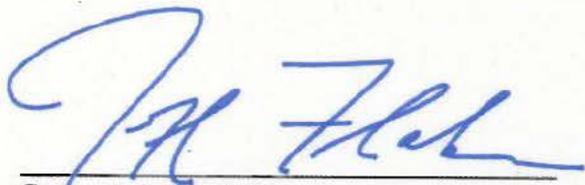
Representative Paul Gosar



Senator Mike Enzi



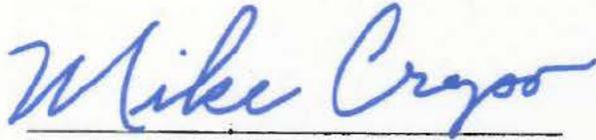
Representative Steve Daines



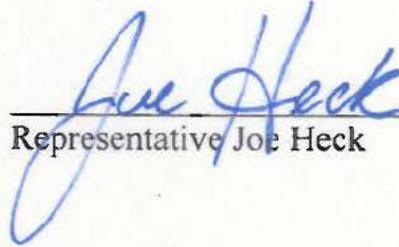
Senator Jeff Flake



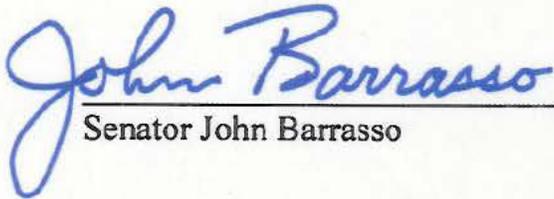
Representative Rob Bishop



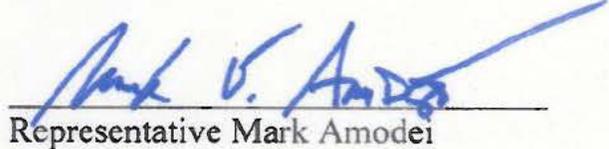
Senator Mike Crapo



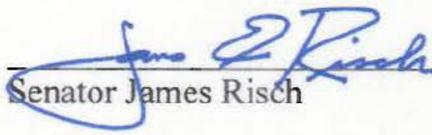
Representative Joe Heck



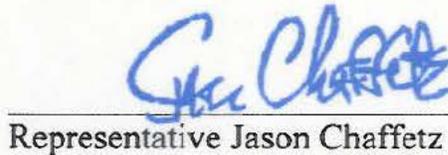
Senator John Barrasso



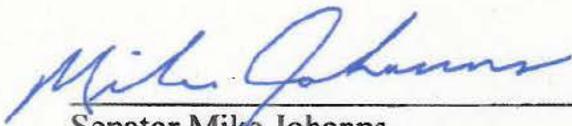
Representative Mark Amodei



Senator James Risch



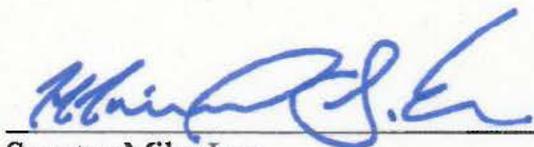
Representative Jason Chaffetz



Senator Mike Johanns



Representative Kevin Cramer



Senator Mike Lee



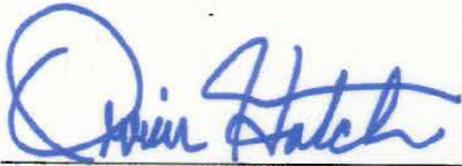
Representative Steve Pearce



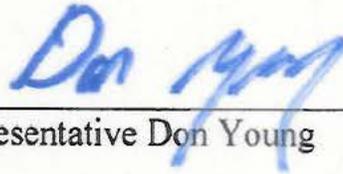
Senator Lisa Murkowski



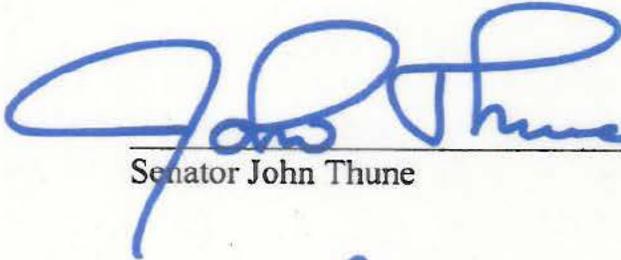
Representative Trent Franks



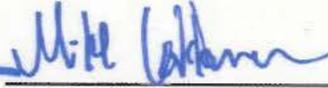
Senator Orrin Hatch



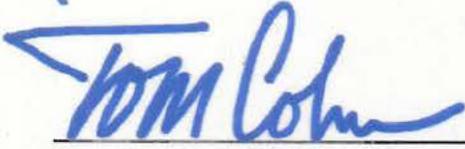
Representative Don Young



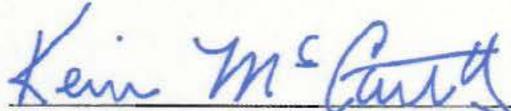
Senator John Thune



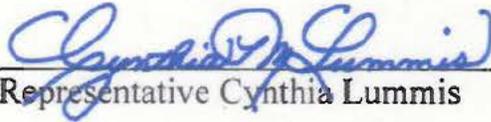
Representative Mike Coffman



Senator Tom Coburn



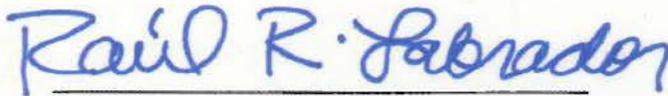
Representative Kevin McCarthy



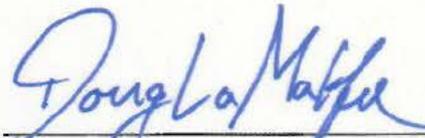
Representative Cynthia Lummis



Representative Chris Stewart



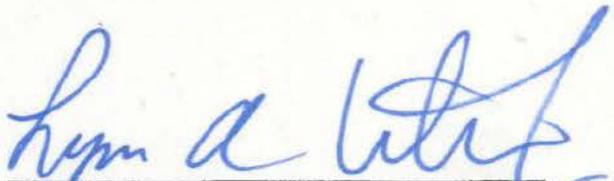
Representative Raúl Labrador



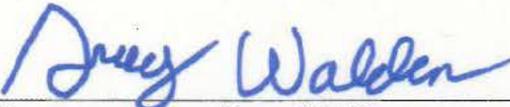
Representative Doug LaMalfa



Representative Louie Gohmert



Representative Lynn Westmoreland



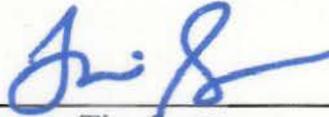
Representative Greg Walden



Representative David Schweikert



Senator David Vitter



Senator Tim Scott



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

NOV 21 2013

The Honorable Steve Daines
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Daines:

Thank you for your letter dated November 13, 2013, regarding your reaffirmed commitment to conservation and multiple use management of our public lands. The parks, refuges, monuments, and public lands that Congress and Presidents protected in the past safeguard our uniquely American heritage, provide our families a place to recreate, sustain watersheds and wildlife, and generate important economic activity in your State and around this Country.

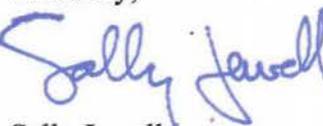
I do believe, as I said in the National Press Club remarks your letter references, that we have a moral obligation to build on this legacy and to leave our lands, waters, and wildlife to the next generation in a better condition than we found them. Fulfilling that obligation could happen through legislation or may mean using the Antiquities Act, as have 16 Presidents of both parties over the course of more than a century, to protect 130 National Monuments at places like the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, and Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients.

As the Administration moves forward to determine what sorts of places may warrant protection, we will continue to focus our efforts on areas where there is a groundswell of local support. I am committed to continuing this Administration's public engagement and the involvement of local communities as an important part of considering any new designation. That is a commitment the President has made and has delivered on. Each of the nine designations made by this Administration to date was the result of strong local support and the type of "bottom-up" effort your letter endorses.

We are not driven by lists made in Washington, but respond to letters and invitations from citizens on the ground and members of Congress who have drafted legislation or invited me to their communities to see their most cherished lands and prized historic landmarks. These are places such as the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument and the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, which members of Congress sought to protect.

There are dozens of bills in the House and the Senate right now by members of both parties that identify special areas that they want to protect. I am equally committed to work with Congress to make another public lands bill, like the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009, a reality.

I look forward to working with you and all interested stakeholders as we move forward to preserve our Nation's treasures and build a conservation legacy for the next generation. A similar reply is being sent to the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

Sally Jewell

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 13, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

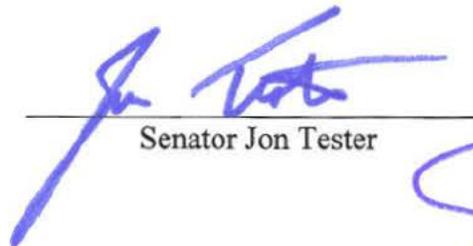
We are writing to express our deep concerns regarding the recent revelation that the Department of Interior is requesting that three Montana school districts return payments made by the federal government dating back to 1977. We feel that more information is needed to fully understand how this happened and what can be done to correct the issue. With that in mind, we ask that relevant representatives from the Department of the Interior make themselves available for a call with the Montana Congressional Delegation and impacted Montana school districts.

These rural school districts will be hard-pressed to rework their annual budgets without these annual payments, much less pay back the millions of dollars they received through the National Park Service. We do not foresee a situation that the three school districts would be able to repay funds provided to them by the Department of Interior over the last 30 years. We are aware there is a waiver process available to these school districts and will support them if they choose to exercise that option.

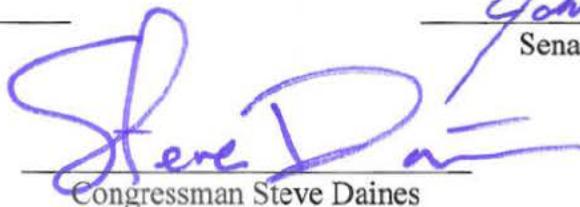
We appreciate the outreach we have received to date from the Department of Interior and ask that it continue so we ensure the impacted Montana school districts have the information and assistance they need. Due to the time sensitive nature of this situation, we ask that the call be held at the earliest possible time that works for the school districts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

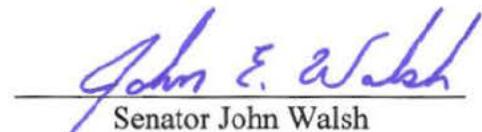
Sincerely,



Senator Jon Tester



Congressman Steve Daines



Senator John Walsh



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 12 2014

The Honorable Steve Daines
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Daines:

Thank you for your letter dated February 13, 2014, seeking information regarding the overpayments made by the National Park Service (NPS) to three Montana school districts in the vicinity of Yellowstone National Park (Park). I know that this is an important issue for you and for the affected school districts. Please know that the Department of the Interior (Department) and the NPS are exploring all options available to resolve the matter.

I understand from the NPS that these payments were authorized in 1948 when Congress gave the Secretary of the Interior authority to make payments from Yellowstone National Park revenues to school districts that serve students that are children of Yellowstone employees residing on untaxed Federal land in or near the Park and for which payments in lieu of taxes were not made by the United States. These payments from the Park continued erroneously in 1977 after passage of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Act, until 2013. Under the Federal debt collection law, the Federal Government must seek recovery of these overpayments from the school districts.

I appreciate your concerns about the challenges that these rural school districts face and I am committed to continuing to work with your offices, the affected school districts, and other Federal agencies to expeditiously seek a reasonable resolution to this issue. Consider this letter, as well as the recent telephone discussion with staff from the Montana delegation, representatives from the Department, and leaders from the school districts, a demonstration of our commitment to bring about that resolution. The Department and the NPS are also fully supportive of working with Congress on this issue.

An similar letter is being sent to the other cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Sally Jewell

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2600

February 28, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

I write to call your attention to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Project in Eastern Montana and to request your personal assistance with finalizing the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority's (DRWA) Feasibility Report.

In your capacity, you have the responsibility to ensure efficient management and permit processes for important projects that provide vital services to Americans, including projects relating to rural water systems. The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Project will help treat and deliver water to many in eastern Montana. I think we both agree the federal government must move as expeditiously as possible to limit any bureaucratic delays to these important projects. Unfortunately, however, the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Project has been delayed for almost a decade due to ongoing bureaucratic complexity and red-tape.

The DRWA has worked with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation for over ten years to gain federal authorization for its Regional Water Project which was included in the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006. The draft rules for the project were subsequently published by the Department of the Interior in late 2008, but then are still not finalized. The DRWA has encountered recurring BOR reinterpretations of the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006, and multiple staff changes at the BOR office in Billings, creating more delays in the project. Most recently, after a final Feasibility Study was submitted in September, 2012 by the DRWA, BOR is requiring yet another "Interim Feasibility Study," to provide 35% of the completed design.

I am concerned this additional study is redundant and have been informed it could add about \$10-12 million to the cost of the project. To date, the DRWA, the State of Montana and the federal government have spent over \$2 million on this project and completed various studies as requested by the Bureau of Reclamation. Madame Secretary, further delays are unacceptable.

I respectfully request your Department allow the DRWA to revise their existing Feasibility Study to reflect the improvements necessary according to the Bureau of Reclamation. Thank you for your consideration of this request and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Daines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a distinct "D" for "Daines".

STEVE DAINES
Member of Congress

CC: Michael Connor
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation