

October 25, 2016

Honorable Rob Bishop
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

As a person of faith, you understand our shared moral responsibility to care for God's creation. A strong heritage of stewardship of the earth and reverence for all of God's creation is found in the scriptures and the writings and statements of Church leaders, including Mormon leader Brigham Young.

"All that we possess and enjoy are the gifts of God to us, whether they be in earthly substance, physical constitution, or mental power; we are accountable to Him for the use we make of these precious gifts. ... It is not our privilege to waste the Lord's substance." – Brigham Young

As faith organizations, we support America's protected public lands and we urge you to join us. Stewardship of our public lands and preservation of our historic and cultural heritage is an important part of our role as caretakers of creation. We view the Antiquities Act as an important tool in protecting the special places of God's creation where we play, pray, and learn.

Since it became law in 1906, the Antiquities Act has been used by 16 presidents – eight Republicans and eight Democrats – starting with Theodore Roosevelt. The Act authorizes the President to proclaim "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest" as national monuments.

The recent Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is an important example of how the Antiquities Act was employed to help preserve a unique piece of God's creation. With canyons deeper than the Grand Canyon and seamounts nearly as tall as the Rocky Mountains, this unique underwater environment is home for hundreds of species. Our oceans, as much as our lands and the sky, are gifts of God and worthy of our stewardship.

Climate change requires we also fulfill our moral responsibility, as people of faith, to ensure the long-term sustainability of our oceans. This being the first area in the Atlantic Ocean protected as a marine monument, it is especially important that we celebrate this opportunity to conserve and study the area, including marine mammals and rare corals and

fish that thrive there, to understand the manifestation of God's work and the imperative that we protect our natural resources in the face of climate change.

We urge you to show you value protecting God's creation by demonstrating support for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine Monument. We also hope that you will join us to be a steward of the earth and ensure America's conservation legacy continues with the Antiquities Act.

Thank you for your continued work in the U.S. Congress stewarding our public lands and waters.

Sincerely,

Arizona Faith Network
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Earth Ministry
Eco-Justice Ministries
Faith Action Network
Green Chalice, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Lutherans for Restoring Creation
Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
National Baptist Convention of America
New Mexico Conference of Churches
Progressive National Baptist Convention
Rhode Island State Council of Churches
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Caretakers of God's Creation
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society