

October 4, 2016

President Barak Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As faith organizations with a strong commitment to stewardship of the earth and reverence for all God's creation, we are writing to thank you for your leadership in protecting public lands in the United States and in particular for naming a wide variety of new national monuments.

Stewardship of our public land and preservation of our historic and cultural heritage is an important part of our role as caretakers of the Earth. We applaud your use of the Antiquities Act as a tool to protect the special places in 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.

Recent monument designations such as Pullman in Illinois, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad in Maryland, Cesar Chavez in California are examples of monuments that help tell the stories of all of us. Monument designations such as the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument help protect vast areas of God's creation that a diversity of sea life call home. Our oceans, as much as our lands and the sky, are gifts of God and worthy of our stewardship.

From historic monuments that remind us of our legacy to iconic national parks that play host to memorable family vacations or help preserve precious habitat, our nation's public lands are beloved embodiments of God's power and love.

We join you in your land and water stewardship efforts as you build up the United States' conservation legacy. We believe the Antiquities Act supports those efforts, and merits our support. Our responsibility to care for Creation is coupled with our duty to preserve and honor the story of us all, and ensure all of our children have equitable access to healthy recreation and the opportunity to find their own story in our park system.

Thank you for your leadership and continued stewardship of our public lands and waters.

Sincerely,

Arizona Faith Network  
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life  
Disciples Center for Public Witness  
Eco-Justice Ministries  
Faith Action Network  
Green Chalice, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Earth Ministry  
Lutherans for Restoring Creation  
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  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Methodist Caretakers of God's Creation