

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Markey
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing on National Monuments
September 13, 2011

Mr. Chairman, our great nation has been shaped by many significant political movements. The civil rights movement sought justice and equality; the environmental movement sought breathable air and drinkable water for our children. These are proud chapters in our nation's history.

It is my hope that today's hearing marks the *death* of a political movement, however.

It is time, finally, for the *Stop the Monuments Movement* to end.

The *Stop the Monuments Movement* was organized around the belief that a plan conceived by Teddy Roosevelt in 1906 poses a serious threat to the United States of America and must be stopped.

To supporters of this movement, the Antiquities Act poses such a dire threat, that six different bills in this Congress alone are needed to defend America against the danger posed by national monuments.

It is time for this to stop. In fact, the *Stop the Monuments Movement* should have been declared dead last February. That is when an amendment to H.R. 1 to prohibit new national monument designations *failed* on the House floor.

213 Members of this House, including 34 Republicans, voted *against* that amendment. A majority of this House is now on record rejecting the *Stop the Monuments Movement* – it is time for this Committee to reject this movement as well.

It would not be a great loss – the *Stop the Monuments Movement* was never particularly popular. Fifteen Presidents, both Republicans and Democrats, rejected the movement and used the Antiquities Act to designate more than 100 national monuments. George W. Bush used the Act 6 times, including designation of the largest national monument ever.

Prior Congresses rejected the call to stop national monuments, as well. For many years, the Interior Appropriations

bill has *protected* national monuments by prohibiting oil and gas development within their boundaries.

Congress has also acted more than 30 times to reaffirm monuments designated under the Antiquities Act by upgrading them to national parks or other units of the National Park System.

And in addition to American Presidents, and previous Congresses, the American people have also flatly rejected the *Stop the Monuments Movement*. Many of the monuments designated under the

Antiquities Act are among the most-beloved and most-visited destinations in the country.

In addition to its lack of support, it is time for the *Stop the Monuments Movement* to end because the two claims on which the movement is based are plainly false.

The first claim is that national monument designations are “land grabs” that “lock up” private property.

In reality, the Antiquities Act authorizes the President to designate national monuments on federal land only. The Act allows the President to act quickly to protect resources already owned by the federal government. These designations do not, and cannot take private property.

The second basic tenet of the *Stop the Monuments Movement* is that monument designations harm local economies. This claim is false as well.

As Dr. Rasker will testify today, each of the large national monument designations examined by Headwaters Economics was followed by increases in population, employment and household income in the surrounding community.

In the end, the *Stop the Monuments Movement* failed to attract significant interest. It was based on false allegations and anecdotal information squarely at odds with economic reality. The *Stop the Monument Movement* has clearly run its course.

If public opinion, economic data, Presidential support and a majority vote of the full House of Representatives are relevant, this will be the last meeting of the *Stop the Monuments Movement* in history.

And if this is indeed the very place the *Movement* meets its end, perhaps some future President will see fit to designate this hearing room as a national monument.