

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memo

June 11, 2015

To: Federal Lands Subcommittee Members
From: Spencer Kimball, Subcommittee Staff, x 6-7736
Subject: Legislative hearing on H.R. 496, “Alabama Hills National Scenic Area Establishment Act” on **June 16, 2015 at 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth.**

H.R. 496 – “Alabama Hills National Scenic Area Establishment Act”

Bill Summary

H.R. 496, introduced by Congressman Paul Cook (R-CA), would establish the Alabama Hills National Scenic Area in the State of California. The designated area would encompass 18,610 acres in central California and would be preserved for recreational and other existing uses.

Invited Witnesses

Mr. Kevin Mazzu, Vice-President
Alabama Hills Stewardship Group
Bishop, California

Department of Interior - TBD

Background

The Alabama Hills are a range of hills and rock formations near the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the Owens Valley. The area is home to a variety of recreational activities and has served as a popular filming location for both television shows and films. Several television shows were filmed in the area, including the *Gene Autry Show*, the *Lone Ranger*, and *Bonanza*. Films such as *Tremors*, *Gladiator*, and *Iron Man* were also filmed, in part, in the Alabama Hills.

The Alabama Hills Stewardship Group was established to promote the long term vision, conservation, use, enhancement, and enjoyment of the Alabama Hills area. Groups and organizations that have worked with this group include Inyo County, the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, the Lone-Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, local business owners, and other key stakeholders. With the goal of protecting the area from the industrial-scale renewable energy development that is occurring in surrounding areas, while also protecting existing uses, the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group, as well as off-road groups, the local chamber of commerce,

and many others, came together over the last two years to share ideas that ultimately formed the basis of H.R. 496.

The bill restricts the development of large-scale industrial projects such as renewable energy generation, while preserving all existing recreational and commercial uses of the Alabama Hills. These include filming, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, recreational mineral prospecting (“rock-hounding”), and authorized motorized vehicle use. Additionally, existing grazing activities would be allowed to continue within the National Scenic Area. The bill also authorizes a local landowner to purchase certain Federal lands adjacent to the proposed National Scenic Area.

The bill is supported by: Alabama Hills Stewardship Group; Eastern Sierra 4x4 Club; City of Bishop, California; Advocates for Access to Public Lands; Inyo County Film Commission; Friends of Inyo; Inyo County Board of Supervisors; Inyo County Superintendent of Schools; Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce; and Southern California Edison.

Administration Position

Unknown at this time.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.