



## Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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### House Approves Measure to Ensure Public Participation in National Monument Designations

*H.R. 1459 Stops Presidents Secretive and Unilateral Designations*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the House of Representatives passed HR 1459, the *Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act* by a bipartisan vote of 222 - 201. This bill, introduced by Public Lands and Environmental Regulation Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Rob Bishop (UT-01), would require public participation before a presidentially-declared National Monument is made official under the Antiquities Act.

The Antiquities Act is a century-old law that allows the President to unilaterally designate National Monuments without any input or involvement from the people, communities, or elected officials of the areas that would be directly impacted. This authority was originally intended only to be used in emergencies, but unfortunately has been abused and used for political purposes by presidents of both parties.

H.R. 1459 would guarantee public involvement and ensure that the designation process is transparent by requiring all national monument designations made under the Antiquities Act to complete the NEPA process.

*“When new national monuments are established by a President, there is absolutely no requirement that the public be given an opportunity to share their concerns or opinions about the potential designation. We’re finding that this can result in complications about the management and execution of the designation itself. The application of NEPA would bring such issues to light prior to the designation being made. National monuments created by Congress are required to go through a public process that includes transparency and public participation. It’s common sense that the public should be involved regardless of whether or not Congress or the President initiates the designation. Today’s bill is a win for the American people,”* **said Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01).**

*“National monuments are one of the most restrictive land-use designations. They can significantly block public access and limit public recreation and other job-creating economic activities. This type of major land-use decision should not be done unilaterally and should only be done with the active participation and support of the public,”* **said House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).** *“There is no legitimate reason*

*for presidential national monument designations to be exempted from public comment and participation. Other land designations are required to complete the NEPA process and the presidents should not be held to a different standard. This important bill ensures that future designations are transparent and that the public always has a voice.”*

Specifically, H.R. 1459 :

- Classifies National Monument declarations under the Antiquities Act as a major federal action, which would require the application of NEPA;
- Allows for a temporary “emergency” designation (5,000 acres or less for a three-year period) by the president if there is an imminent threat to an American antiquity. After three years, the designation would only become permanent if the NEPA process is completed or it is approved by Congress;
- Limits National Monument declarations to no more than one per state during any four-year presidential term in office, unless otherwise approved by Congress;
- Prevents the inclusion of private property in monument declarations without the prior approval and written consent of property owners; and
- Requires within one year of a declaration, a feasibility study and an estimated cost to taxpayers associated with managing the monument in perpetuity, including any loss of federal and state revenue.

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