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Vote Check: Republican Amendments Defeated to Prevent Interest Groups from Targeting Wind, Solar and Coal Plants Near National Parks

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, during a Full Committee markup, Democrats on the House Natural Resources Committee voted against two amendments offered by National Parks, Forest and Public Lands Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-01) to ensure that National Park designations are not used to block or oppose the construction of wind, solar or coal power projects.

- **Bishop Amendment to H.R. 2899, Oregon Caves National Monument Boundary Adjustment Act**
Record Vote: 17 YEA, 20 NAY ([View Roll Call](#))

This amendment would ensure that nothing in the bill would affect the authority to construct, maintain or operate coal power plants needed by the American people.

- **Bishop Amendment to H.R. 4438, San Antonia Missions National Historical Park Boundary Expansion Act**
Record Vote: 19 YEA, 23 NAY ([View Roll Call](#))

This amendment would ensure that nothing in the bill would affect the authority to construct, maintain or operate wind and solar power facilities needed by the American people.

Background

Rep. Bishop introduced these amendments due to the alarming trend of interest groups and the National Park Service (NPS) frequently opposing or blocking the construction of wind, solar or coal energy projects near National Parks.

For example:

- The NPS and Senator Feinstein opposed the 1400-megawatt Solar Six project in Barstow, CA because it was between the Mojave National Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park.
- The NPS is opposing the Whistling Ridge Wind Project in Washington State because turbines may impact the viewshed as the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

and Oregon Pioneer Trail passes within five miles of the project.

- The Redding Wind Farm in Maine was opposed and ultimately defeated by NPS and groups because turbines would have been as close as one mile from the Appalachian Trail.
- In February 2010, a coalition of nine groups asked the Obama Administration to declare that a coal powered plant in northwest New Mexico violated federal law by polluting the air over national parks and wilderness areas.
- A month later, WildEarth Guardians and the National Parks and Conservation Association asked the Interior Department to declare that coal plants in Colorado were impairing visibility in Rocky Mountain National Park, even though these plants were over 100 miles away.
- The National Park Conservation Association has released a [report](#) that details the 10 National Parks they claim are most threatened by coal power plants.

Energy development is already prohibited in National Parks and it is a far-reaching abuse of power to block energy production, including renewable energy projects, that do not even fall within park boundaries.

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