

**Statement by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch  
Before the  
House Resources subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

**Hearing on H.R. 1925 America's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2009**

Mr. Chairman I am grateful for the opportunity to address this committee with regard to H.R. 1925, America's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2009. I also want to thank the witnesses from Utah who have come to provide testimony today on both sides of this legislation. In particular, I thank Lieutenant Governor Greg Bell of Utah. His views are of significant value to us during the consideration of this proposal. We will also hear from Carbon County Commissioner John Jones; Peter Metcalf, the president of Black Diamond Equipment; Bryson Garbett, a former Utah State Legislator; and Rocky Anderson, the former mayor of Salt Lake City.

First off, I note the title of the bill under consideration. The authors of the legislation were careful to name it "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act," not Utah's Red Rock Wilderness Act, even though the bill's only purpose is to designate more than one-sixth of my state as formal wilderness. According to the authors of this legislation, Utahns have no special claim to those nine million acres within our state's boundaries. After all, Mr. Chairman, those are federal lands, and they belong to ALL Americans, they argue. Well, there may be some truth to that point of view, but it's an intentionally simplistic view, and any member of Congress with federal lands within his or her district will quickly recognize that. And I would be surprised if there were many members of Congress who would not take at least some offense at a proposal to set aside a sixth of their state or district without their consultation or input.

It is true that all Americans are stakeholders in the management of our federal lands. But in law and in policymaking, stakeholders are not always equal. It is a basic principle of policymaking that stakeholders should be involved in the formulation of policies that would affect them. And it follows, Mr. Chairman, that the voices of those stakeholders most impacted by legislation should be given the greatest weight. This proposal turns that principle on its head.

Certainly, those Americans who live on and around public lands, and sometimes make their living on them, have the greatest stake in management decisions affecting those lands. It is wrong that this legislation turns a completely deaf ear to these most significant stakeholders.

Year after year, we have seen this legislation introduced in Congress. The bill is monumental in its scope: nine million acres of land within only one state. It would cover an area that is actually

larger than a number of states put together. But it's also a monument to an old way of approaching wilderness designation. To be more precise, it's a monument to a failed approach to wilderness designation.

The special interest groups who are behind this bill have raised tens of millions of dollars over the years, with the promise to their donors that the money would be spent to protect important tracts of beautiful red rock in Utah. I've seen some of their past brochures, and to be honest, a lot of the pictures they show are of areas already protected from development. Their strategy has been to play to American's emotions, rather than to constructively work to win actual wilderness protection. In fact, all that money and all that effort has produced exactly zero acres of new wilderness in Utah.

Meanwhile, members of the Utah Congressional delegation have done the hard work of doing wilderness the right way. We've listened to all interested parties, and especially to those stakeholders with the most at stake. And by collaboration and inclusion we have had success. And, Mr. Chairman, we continue to seek areas of agreement among broad sets of stakeholders for the designation of more wilderness in our state.

I know that the authors and cosponsors of this legislation - none of which is from Utah - are sincere in their effort to provide protections for important areas in Utah - even if they have never seen those areas. To those colleagues who have put their names on this proposal I say: Thanks, but no thanks. I think as a congressional delegation we have proven we can handle the question of wilderness in Utah.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.