

Dear President Biden and Honorable Secretary of the Department of Interior Deb Haaland,

Thank you for your commitment to taking climate action and protecting our public lands through programs like the historic [America the Beautiful initiative](#). Public lands are an integral part of the fabric of our mountain communities and a major driver of our local economies. We also thank you for your decision to restore protections to Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine national monuments.

As local elected officials, we are tasked with finding creative solutions to the many challenges that come with the ever-increasing popularity of our public lands; our growing infrastructure needs; lack of access to parks and open space by historically under-served communities; as well as the devastating and expensive impacts of climate change. With these reasons in mind, we ask you to use the Antiquities Act to protect more of our public lands by designating them as national monuments.

**Overcrowding and Infrastructure Needs:** The COVID pandemic has shown us that access to public lands is more vital to our health and well-being than we ever thought as more and more people have gravitated to the outdoors close to home and ever-increasing numbers of visitors recreate on the public lands near our communities. Adding more protected lands through parks and public land, as well as funding to manage these lands would improve access and lessen overcrowding.

**Increased Access for an Outdoors for All:** We applaud the America the Beautiful initiative that includes goals to create a more inclusive and equitable vision of nature conservation that better reflects our country's values and expands access to the outdoors for all. By uniting local governments, private landowners, Native American Tribes and Tribal communities, as well as historically underserved communities, this initiative will bring us all together to advance a shared vision of a better America. To do this, we need more protected public lands, including as national monuments, that build upon ongoing and often-untold stories of the true history of the United States.

**Climate Impacts:** Increased drought, wildfires, flooding, dust on snow events, and record-setting temperatures have caused astronomical expenses for our communities and have negatively impacted our public health, land, water, and air quality and quantity while harming our agriculture, economies, and quality of life. [Fossil fuel extraction on public lands generates 25% of our country's climate change causing emissions](#). Yet, science has shown that conserving nature can provide over [one-third of the cost-effective climate mitigation needed through 2030](#) to hold warming below 2°C. We urge you to use your authority under the Antiquities Act to designate new national monuments, which would protect more lands from oil and gas drilling and could help reduce climate impacts that are greatly harming our communities.

**Economic Benefits of Protected Lands to Mountain Communities:** Economic research shows that [employment and personal income grew significantly faster in rural counties with conserved, restored, and protected public lands](#) than rural counties with fewer protected and conserved areas. [Conserved public lands, including wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, national conservation lands, and national monuments, are the backbone of the rapidly growing outdoor recreation economy](#), generating [\\$788 billion in consumer](#)

[spending nationally and supporting 5.2 million jobs.](#) They are the foundation of our strong tourism economies and make our communities a very attractive place for businesses and their employees to locate.

With an evenly split Congress with a lot on its plate that is unlikely to move on its own to protect public lands, we are counting on the administration to move swiftly to use its authority under the Antiquities Act to protect more natural, cultural, and historic sites, as well as waters and lands of great scientific value.

The Antiquities Act conserves vital places so our stories can be told and experiences can be shared for generations to come. Please take action to protect more of our great public lands as national monuments through the use of the Antiquities Act to truly accomplish the America the Beautiful Initiative.

Sincerely,

- Mayor Paul Deasy, City of Flagstaff, Arizona
- Council Member Adam Shimoni, City of Flagstaff, Arizona
- Mayor Pro Tem Devin Middlebrook, City of South Lake Tahoe, California
- Council Member Cody Bass, City of South Lake Tahoe, California
- Mayor Torre, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Mayor Pro Tem Ward Hauenstein, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Council Member Rachel Richards, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes, Town of Avon, Colorado
- Mayor Bill Kane, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Elyse Hottel, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Bill Infante, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member David Knight, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Ryan Slack, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Gary Tennenbaum, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Glenn Drummond, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Mayor Aaron Brockett, City of Boulder, Colorado
- Council Member Mark Wallach City of Boulder, Colorado
- Council Member Matt Benjamin, City of Boulder, Colorado
- Council Member Dick Carleton, Town of Breckenridge, Colorado
- Mayor Eric Mamula, Town of Breckenridge, Colorado
- Mayor Dan Richardson, Town of Carbondale, Colorado
- Town Trustee Luis Yllanes, Town of Carbondale, Colorado
- County Commissioner Keith Baker, Chaffee County, Colorado
- Council Member Beth Goldstone, Town of Crested Butte, Colorado
- Mayor Pro Tem Barbara Noseworthy, City of Durango, Colorado
- Council Member Jessika Buell, City of Durango, Colorado
- Council Member Melissa Youssef, City of Durango, Colorado
- County Commissioner Matt Scherr, Eagle County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County, Colorado
- Mayor Hunter Mortensen, Town of Frisco, Colorado
- Council Member Melissa Sherburne, Town of Frisco, Colorado
- Mayor Jonathan Godes, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- County Commissioner Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County, Colorado

- Former Council Member Polly Christensen, City of Longmont, Colorado
- Council Member Marcia Martin, City of Longmont, Colorado
- Council Member Susie Hidalgo-Fahring, City of Longmont, Colorado
- Council Member Patrick Berry, Town of Mountain Village, Colorado
- Mayor Corinne Platt, Town of Ophir, Colorado
- Council Member Peggy Lindsey, City of Ouray, Colorado
- County Commissioner Jake Niece, Ouray County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Lynn Padgett, Ouray County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Greg Poschman, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Steve Child, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Kelly McNicholas Kury, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Francie Jacober, Pitkin County, Colorado
- Mayor John Clark, Town of Ridgway, Colorado
- Council Member Terry Schuyler, Town of Ridgway, Colorado
- Council Member Kevin Grambley, Town of Ridgway, Colorado
- County Commissioner Tim Corrigan, Routt County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Beth Melton, Routt County, Colorado
- Former Mayor P.T. Wood, City of Salida, Colorado
- Mayor Dan Shore, City of Salida, Colorado
- Council Member Harald Kasper, City of Salida, Colorado
- County Commissioner Lance Waring, San Miguel County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Hilary Cooper, San Miguel County, Colorado
- Mayor Shane Fuhrman, Town of Silverton, Colorado
- Mayor Bill Madsen, Snowmass Village, Colorado
- County Commissioner Josh Blanchard, Summit County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Tamara Pogue, Summit County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Elisabeth Lawrence, Summit County, Colorado
- Former County Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit County, Colorado
- Mayor DeLanie Young, Town of Telluride, Colorado
- Former Mayor Pro Tem Todd Brown, Town of Telluride, Colorado
- Council Member Lars Carlson, Town of Telluride, Colorado
- Council Member Adrienne Christy, Town of Telluride, Colorado
- Council Member Geneva Shaunette, Town of Telluride, Colorado
- Mayor Pro Tem Kim Langmaid, Town of Vail, Colorado
- Council Member Travis Coggin, Town of Vail, Colorado
- Council Member Brian Stockmar, Town of Vail, Colorado
- Mayor Hyrum Johnson, City of Driggs, Idaho
- County Commissioner Angenie McCleary, Blaine County, Ketchum, Idaho
- President of City Council Kaz Thea, City of Hailey, Idaho
- Mayor Shelby Rognstad, City of Sandpoint, Idaho
- County Commissioner Michael Whitfield, Teton County, Idaho
- County Commissioner Cindy Riegel, Teton County, Idaho
- County Commissioner Juanita Vero, Missoula County, Montana
- County Commissioner David Strohmaier, Missoula County, Montana
- County Commissioner Josh Slotnick, Missoula County, Montana
- Mayor John Muhlfeld, City of Whitefish, Montana
- County Commissioner Tick Segerblom, Clark County, Nevada

- County Commissioner Justin Jones, Clark County, Nevada
- Council Member Devon Reese, City of Reno, Nevada
- Assemblymember Nevada Legislature Howard Watts, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Assemblymember Nevada Legislature Sandra Jauregui, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Assemblymember Nevada Legislature Lesley Cohen, Henderson, Nevada
- Mayor Pro Tem Kasandra A. Gandara, City of Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Council Member Gill Sorg, City of Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Council Member Gabe Vasquez, City of Las Cruces, New Mexico
- County Commissioner Hank Hughes, Santa Fe County, New Mexico
- County Commissioner Anna Hansen, Santa Fe County, New Mexico
- Mayor Alan Webber, City of Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Council Member Renee Villarreal, City of Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Council Member Darien Fernandez, Town of Taos, New Mexico
- Council Member Tonya Graham, City of Ashland, Oregon
- Council Member Stefani Seffinger, City of Ashland, Oregon
- Council Member Melanie Kebler, City of Bend, Oregon
- Council Member Barb Campbell, City of Bend, Oregon
- Mayor Harris Sondak, Town of Alta, Utah
- Council Member Margaret Bourke, Town of Alta, Utah
- Council Member Harry Holland, Town of Castle Valley, Utah
- Council Member Pamela Gibson, Town of Castle Valley, Utah
- Council Member Tory Hill, Town of Castle Valley, Utah
- County Attorney Christina Sloan, Grand County, Utah
- County Commissioner Jacques Hadler, Grand County, Utah
- County Commissioner Sarah Stock, Grand County, Utah
- County Commissioner Kevin Walker, Grand County, Utah
- County Commissioner Gabriel Woytek, Grand County, Utah
- Council Member Rani Derasary, City of Moab, Utah
- Council Member Kalen Jones, City of Moab, Utah
- Council Member Tawny Knuteson-Boyd, City of Moab, Utah
- Mayor Andy Beerman, Park City, Utah
- County Council Chair Glenn Wright, Summit County, Utah
- Mayor Seth Fleetwood, City of Bellingham, Washington
- Council Member Michael Lillquist, City of Bellingham, Washington
- Mayor Carl J. Florea, City of Leavenworth, Washington
- Council Member Jessica Sell Chambers, Town of Jackson, Wyoming



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, December 8, 2021

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## Western Local Elected Officials Call on President Biden to Meet His America the Beautiful Goals, Establish More National Monuments

Today, The Mountain Pact sent a [letter](#) to the Biden administration signed by over 115 Western U.S. state legislators, county commissioners, mayors, and council members from all eleven Western states. The letter thanks the administration for taking climate action and protecting our public lands through programs like the historic [America the Beautiful initiative](#). The letter applauds the administration's restoration of Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts national monuments and urges the President to use the Antiquities Act to protect more lands as national monuments.

The letter states, *"As local elected officials, we are tasked with finding creative solutions to the many challenges that come with the ever-increasing popularity of our public lands; our growing infrastructure needs; lack of access to parks and open space by historically under-served communities; as well as the devastating and expensive impacts of climate change. With these reasons in mind, we ask you to use the Antiquities Act to protect more of our public lands by designating them as national monuments."*

**Anna Peterson, Executive Director of The Mountain Pact said,** "We support the America the Beautiful initiative that includes goals to create a more inclusive and equitable vision of nature conservation, which better reflects our country's values and expands access to the outdoors for all. By uniting local governments, private landowners, Native American Tribes and Tribal communities, as well as historically underserved communities, this initiative will bring us all together to advance a shared vision of a better America. To do this, we need more protected public lands, including national monuments, that build upon ongoing and often-untold stories of the true history of the United States."

**Clark County, Nevada Commissioner Justin Jones said,** "The COVID pandemic has shown us that access to public lands is more vital to our health and well-being than we ever thought as more and more people have gravitated to the outdoors close to home and ever-increasing numbers of visitors recreate on the public lands near our communities. Adding more protected lands through parks and public land, as well as having adequate funding to manage these lands would improve access and lessen overcrowding."

**Mayor Torre of the City of Aspen, Colorado said,** "In the face of climate change impacts and increased demand for outdoor recreational opportunities, Aspen is grateful to the Biden administration for protecting public lands across the west for future generations. Since 1980, Aspen has lost an entire month of winter and is experiencing dust on snow events and the impacts of drought, including severe wildfires, which threatens the vibrancy of Aspen's outdoor community and ski town way of life."

**Grand County, Utah Commissioner Sarah Stock said**, "I thank President Biden for restoring protections to Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments. Increased drought, wildfires, flooding, dust on snow events, and record-setting temperatures have caused astronomical expenses for our communities and have negatively impacted our public health, land, water, and air quality while harming our agriculture, economies, and quality of life. Public lands are an integral part of the fabric of our mountain communities and a major driver of our local economies - we must protect more land."

**Mayor Alan Webber of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico said**, "The Biden administration can reach the goal of protecting more nature by using the Antiquities Act to designate new national monuments proposed through locally and community-led efforts. This will ensure more equitable access to nature; address the climate crisis; restore America's biodiversity and wildlife; and begin to reckon with historic and present injustices."

The letter concludes with, *"We are counting on the administration to move swiftly to use its authority under the Antiquities Act to protect more natural, cultural, and historic sites, as well as waters and lands of great scientific value. The Antiquities Act conserves vital places so our stories can be told and experiences can be shared for generations to come. Please take action to protect more of our great public lands as national monuments through the use of the Antiquities Act to truly accomplish the America the Beautiful initiative."*

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 80 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.

## MORE INFORMATION

*See the full letter [here](#) or download it [here](#).*

In 1906, in response to [looting](#) in the Southwest, Congress passed the [Antiquities Act](#). Since then, 16 presidents - eight Democratic and eight Republican - have established [158 national monuments](#). The Antiquities Act is responsible for protecting many of our most iconic and treasured public lands and waters like Grand Canyon National Park, Olympic National Park, Zion National Park, and Grand Teton National Park.

When a national monument is designated through the Antiquities Act, it is designated on land that is already owned by the American people. The Act does not confer authority on the President to take land from private landowners or from states. It simply increases the level of protection given to important cultural and scientific resources.

[Fossil fuel extraction on public lands generates 25% of our country's climate change causing emissions](#). Yet, science has shown that conserving nature can provide over [one-third of the cost-effective climate mitigation needed through 2030](#) to hold warming below 2°C.