

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Rob Bishop
House Committee on Natural Resources
Oversight Hearing “Forgotten Voices: The Inadequate Review and
Improper Alteration of Our National Monuments”**

- I want to begin my remarks today by commending my Democrat friends on the committee for holding this hearing.
- Two months into this Congress and our distinguished committee has held hearings on an impressive range of topics that are completely out of this committee’s jurisdiction.
- Today, we turn our attention to an issue that is definitely within this committee's jurisdiction: The Antiquities Act.
- I even want to applaud the title of today’s hearing, “Forgotten Voices” though regrettably you only get that part half right.
- Because you see, the truth is when it comes to the Antiquities Act, every single person in this room is a forgotten voice.
- And it is not just that these voices are forgotten in this debate, it is that they have no voice at all when it comes to Presidential Monument Proclamations under the Antiquities Act.

- We are all Forgotten Voices in the Antiquities process with so much power given to Presidents. For that purpose, I have sent letters to Presidents Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama requesting that they work with our committee to come and testify on their creating these monuments and to describe for us how they did not consult with affected States and local elected officials.
- The Antiquities Act has a glaring flaw, in that it vests total power with one individual and leaves no room for our nation's foundational system of checks and balances.
- In recent years, President's from both parties have increasingly exploited this law in order to lock-up vast swaths of land, particularly in the West.
- *((Cue Clerk to put graphic on screen))* The graphic on the screen shows how previous Presidents used and how recent Presidents have abused the Antiquities Act.
- With the stroke of a pen, Presidents are able to disregard local voices in favor of an ever more radical agenda that is frequently advocated for by deeply ideological groups whose extreme objectives would not stand a chance if they were sought through regular order.
- My friends on the other side of the dais frequently wax poetic about the need to protect and preserve the review process set forth by NEPA, the "Bedrock" environmental law. Though I worry they may forget about this

commitment to process when it comes to massive Presidential monument designations that require Zero review. Zero process, and Zero recourse for those affected.

- Though when it comes to the monument proclamations we are discussing today, my friends have found their voice and have made known their displeasure at President Trump using his unilateral authority to reduce national monuments.
- This is true even after the President and Secretary Zinke unquestionably went through a much more thorough review and consultation process than the original designations were given by President Clinton and President Obama respectively.
- The reality is that there is no process or review requirements for Presidential monuments proclamations.
- Which is why I would like to urge my friends today to support legislation that I have just this week reintroduced that will modernize the Antiquities Act to restore its intent, allowing for the protection of actual antiquities without disenfranchisement of local voices. It also standardizes and limits the president's power to reshape monuments.
- As a gesture of bipartisanship, the bill also adopts the direct suggestions made by some of my Democratic colleagues during last year's hearings, including new transparency

requirements surrounding lobbying, local government consultation, and economic impact analysis.

- If my colleagues are serious about their calls for accountability under this Act – no matter which party controls the White House – they should support this bill.
- I'd like to thank all the witnesses for being here today.
- In particular I'd like to thank my friend Kathleen Clarke, who is here representing the State of Utah on behalf of Governor Herbert, who was unable to attend today, because he is back in Utah for the critically important final two days of the State Legislature.
- I've known Kathleen for many years, she brings a wealth experience and talent to these issues having served as BLM Director at the Department of the Interior for several years under President George W. Bush, and also as Governor Herbert's top advisor on public lands issues.
- With that I yield back.