

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity today to testify on my bill, H.R. 4532, the Shash Jaa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument Act.

I would like to thank the entire Utah delegation for supporting this legislation, especially Chairman Rob Bishop and the Natural Resources Committee staff, for their continued work on this issue. This bill would not be possible without their many years of work and by the work of those who proceeding me.

I would also like to thank Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Hanabusa for holding this hearing.

While it is difficult to overstate how politicized the creation and management of our national monuments has become, I believe all sides of this debate share many common goals where we can still work together to protect these areas for generations to come.

These goals include a high priority on protecting and preserving both antiquities and the natural beauty of the area, as well as maintaining traditional uses of the land. I believe H.R. 4532 meets the high standard of these expectations.

I also believe that moving swiftly to find solutions is critical. The two presidential declarations have brought worldwide attention to this area but have done little to put a plan in place or boots on the ground to protect and preserve.

My bill seeks to create a management plan that maintains multiple use of federal lands and protects our most precious national treasures.

This can best be accomplished by utilizing the legislative process, including the Constitutionally mandated system of checks and balances, when making decisions that affect such large areas of land.

Over the past several weeks, many Utahns have contacted my office to share their views about these national monuments and about my proposed legislation, and I hope they continue to do so.

Additionally, we are fortunate today to have several of Utah's elected officials, including our Governor, here to give their perspective on how these lands should be managed.

Congress is the portion of our federal government most directly connected to the American people. It requires broad consensus to put a new idea into law and it is why we as members of Congress must act on this issue. The bill we are discussing today will protect lands in southeastern Utah, in my district and it will do it the right way.

This bill will create the first ever tribally co managed national monument.

This changes the top-down management from Washington, D.C. and installs those closest to the land who understand it the best as it's steward.

This bill empowers Utah's local Tribes and community leaders to properly manage these areas.

This bill creates real protection for important areas, above and beyond what any President can achieve by creating a National Monument using the Antiquities Act.

This bill provides at least 10 law enforcement personnel at each monument to protect important areas, and creates Archaeological Resources Protection Units to ensure the safety of important resources.

This bill also has a mineral withdrawal for the original 1.35-million-acre designation under President Obama. This bill is about protecting areas, not opening mining, or oil and gas, development.

Perhaps most important, this bill creates long-term certainty for my constituents. By using the legislative process this area will be protected for generations to come in law, not subject to change by the stroke of a pen.

I look forward to coming together, finding common ground, and working towards the shared goal of protecting the national treasures we are blessed with in the great State of Utah.