



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**

PO BOX 9257
MISSOULA, MT 59807
406-926-1908

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1203 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva:

On behalf of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife, I write to express our opposition to the Congressional Oversight of the Antiquities Act (H.R. 5499). This legislation aims to undermine the Antiquities Act which has been used for more than a century to conserve our nation's public lands and waters with benefits for hunters and anglers.

The Antiquities Act is a critical tool to conserve large landscapes, secure important fish and wildlife habitat and safeguard traditional hunting and angling opportunities on our public lands and waters. National monuments have a long history of being designated through the Antiquities Act with bipartisan support. Together, nine Democratic and nine Republican presidents have established 161 national monuments through their authority under the Antiquities Act.

By exerting congressional review over the Antiquities Act, H.R. 5499 threatens the use of an important administrative authority that has conserved wild public lands and waters at risk from development. This legislation would erode the foundation for more than a century of conservation success and is wholly unnecessary as Congress already has the authority to establish, modify or abolish national monuments in addition to their authority to manage federal public lands through other designations.

Landscapes conserved through the Antiquities Act have sustained cherished opportunities for hunters and anglers, from the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Montana which provides opportunities for hunters to pursue iconic species like bighorn sheep and sharp tailed grouse, to the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument in New Mexico where anglers can throw a line to Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

BHA has consistently advocated for America's national monuments system and the judicious use of the Antiquities Act as a way to permanently conserve important large landscapes. Key to achieving this outcome is a process that adheres to the following specific tenets:



- Important fish and wildlife habitat must be conserved.
- The monument proclamation must clearly stipulate that management authority over fish and wildlife populations will be retained by state fish and wildlife agencies.
- Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands must remain under the authority and jurisdiction of these multiple-use focused land management agencies.
- The monument proclamation must direct reasonable access for fishing, hunting, and wildlife management, including allowances for terrestrial habitat improvement and water developments.
- The input and guidance of hunters and anglers must be included in management plans for national monuments.
- The monument proposal must be developed through a public process—one that includes hunters and anglers, as well as appropriate state, Tribal, and local governments.
- The monument proposal must gain support from local hunters and anglers.
- Hunting and fishing opportunities must be upheld and the historical and cultural significance of our outdoor traditions explicitly acknowledged in the monument proclamation.

Once again, BHA reiterates our opposition to H.R. 5499 as this legislation would undermine a bedrock conservation law, inhibiting future opportunities to thoughtfully protect public resources with unique values for the benefit of hunters and anglers.

Sincerely,

Kaden McArthur
Government Relations Manager
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers