

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1902

June 5, 2017

Mr. Micah Chambers, Acting Director
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

Thank you for your letter requesting my input regarding the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument located in Maine's Great North Woods. Proponents and opponents of the monument have legitimate and well intentioned concerns about the future of the monument and its impact on the Katahdin Region as a whole. I ask you to please consider all views, especially of those who live and work in the immediate area, as you assess the monument designation and make your recommendation to the President.

As you may know, I have strongly and consistently objected to the process by which a national monument is designated. It is neither right nor democratic for any President to have the unilateral authority to proclaim federal government land in any state without the support of the local citizens who are most impacted. That's why in the 114th Congress I introduced legislation to change the Antiquities Act of 1906 to require the approval of the state's legislature and a state's sitting governor before any land can become a national monument. I will continue to push for that long-term common sense solution to this problem. The best government is the one closest to home.

Over the past two years, citizen referendum votes in three local towns, resolutions by both the Democratic-majority of Maine House of Representatives and the Republican-majority of Maine State Senators, and Maine's Governor all objected to the 87,500 acres in the Katahdin working forest becoming owned and controlled by the federal government. Additionally, both Maine U.S. Senators joined me in expressing significant concerns about the proposed unilateral designation. Still, the previous Presidential Administration bypassed our state and local stakeholders and unilaterally designated the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

President Trump's Executive Order 13792 directs you, as Secretary of the Interior, to thoroughly review 30 national monuments recently created under the Antiquities Act of 1906, including the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument located in Maine's 2nd Congressional District which I represent, and to report your findings to the President. Whatever your final recommendation, I ask you to convey to the President my continued strong opposition to this unchecked executive power and my request that he supports my long-term solution for local control of monument designations.

The Katahdin Region in Central Maine has been hard hit with paper mill closings during the past decade. Thousands of those and other good-paying forest product jobs have been lost. Even so, there are

still approximately 4,100 manufacturing, logging, trucking, land management, and other career jobs supported by the prized Katahdin working forest and its extensive network of logging roads. As you prepare your recommendation for the President, on behalf of the hard-working families in Central Maine, I ask you to please carefully consider the following:

- 1) The often narrow, hilly, and winding gravel logging roads in the area MUST continue to stay open for active commercial use. They provide critical access to the rich wood fiber which is sustainably harvested and transported to Maine paper and saw mills and other wood product manufacturers. Passenger and recreational vehicles must be able to coexist with huge 100,000-pound logging trucks which normally ride down the middle of the roads and cannot easily stop. Safety for all must be a key consideration.
- 2) For generations, Maine families and large private landowners have enjoyed a unique partnership of respectful use of the land for traditional purposes including hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, canoeing, kayaking, snowmobiling, the use of motorized off-road vehicles, and other outdoor recreational activities. This healthy balance is part of our cherished outdoor lifestyle and traditions. It must be preserved.
- 3) Maine knows best how to manage its land and abundant natural resources. Whatever the President decides regarding the national monument, I respectfully request the State be responsible for managing the land and its many uses - not Washington.
- 4) Our beloved Acadia National Park in coastal Bar Harbor is Maine's only national park. There is a history of the local communities having difficulty resolving disputes with the federal government regarding Park expansion and sustainable land use and jobs surrounding the Park. It would be helpful to establish a governing body comprised of the Katahdin Region stakeholders specifically for the purpose of helping to resolve such disputes.
- 5) The National Park Service, which reports to you, has a \$12 billion maintenance backlog for the more than 400 units across the country. Acadia National Park alone is approximately \$69 million short of funds needed to repair and maintain its roads, bridges, rest rooms, and other public facilities and infrastructure. Is there room in the NPS budget to build out and maintain the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument for safe enjoyment if it goes forward?
- 6) Does the President have the legal authority to rescind the designation of a previously designated national monument? Is there legal case history to support any such decision if he so chooses to de-designate? How long would litigation be expected to last if de-designation is challenged in court? What impact might that legal action have for new investment and jobs in the Region?

Maine needs jobs - all jobs. We need forest products jobs as well as tourism jobs throughout our Great State. Please keep this in mind as you review the 30 recently designated national monuments and report back to the President. And, please consider the best career and recreational interests of the local residents, first, who have the most to gain or lose with a national monument in their backyard.

Again, thank you for asking for my input regarding the recently designated Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. This has been an unsettling issue for many concerned families in Central Maine. Whatever the President decides, my Office will be ready to help build the most promising futures for our fellow Mainers and businesses in the Katahdin Region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Poliquin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Bruce Poliquin
Maine Congressman, 2nd District