

United States Congress

September 11, 2014

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This week citizens of Utah and friends from around the Country are celebrating an important anniversary in our beautiful state, the 50th anniversary of the creation of Canyonlands National Park. Canyonlands is one of the "Mighty Five" national parks in Utah and something we are proud of. Located in the southeastern part of our state this otherworldly gem attracts people from all over the globe. In Moab we have heard languages from German to Japanese and English in accents from all over America. People plan and save for years to travel to Utah to see Canyonlands and it never disappoints. Standing on the edge of a 1000 foot cliff and seeing for hundreds of miles somehow puts life into perspective.

We owe a debt of gratitude to people, both elected officials and citizens, who recognized the value of Canyonlands and worked to create the park fifty years ago. The park did not come without controversy, and much controversy remains today. The area around the park means a lot of things to a lot of people. Many people spend their free time exploring the over 2500 miles of roads in and around the park in 4-wheel drive vehicles while others find a special peace in the solitude of the desert in Canyonlands. These interests may seem in conflict, but the land in Utah is big and there is room to accommodate them all.

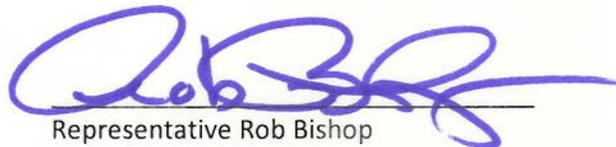
For several years now the Utah Congressional delegation has been developing a public lands bill that will bring certainty and balance to the areas around Canyonlands and other landscapes in Utah. The land surrounding the park would be protected with designations that ensure our grandchildren can stand on the same red rock cliffs and look at the glorious sunsets that our pioneer ancestors saw and view vistas people from around the world come to see today. The bill will benefit our children by exchanging state lands in areas that don't produce revenues, with federal lands that can be developed responsibly. The revenues derived, as a result of the thoughtful development enabled by these exchanges, will benefit school children in Utah. Only Congress can make these changes to the way our public lands are managed. At a time when Congress doesn't get much done, this is one area where something positive is happening.

What better way to celebrate the anniversary of the Canyonlands National Park than by bringing certainty to an area that hasn't had any for a half century. We would be most grateful for your support of our ongoing process to protect the land surrounding Canyonlands National Park.

Sincerely,



Senator Orrin Hatch



Representative Rob Bishop

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Senator Mike Lee



Representative Jason Chaffetz



Representative Chris Stewart

CC: *Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior*