

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2013

Dear Colleague,

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act will be introduced this year, and as members of the Utah congressional delegation we are asking you to please refrain from cosponsoring this bill. Furthermore, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this proposal and other local, Utah-specific lands issues with you or a member of your staff.

The sponsors and cosponsors of this bill will not be from Utah. In fact, Utah elected officials, including the governor, state legislative leadership, rural county commissioners and Utah's Republican and Democratic members of Congress have unanimously opposed this bill.

The Red Rock Wilderness Act would mandate the creation of 9.4 million acres of wilderness, nearly one-fifth of Utah's entire land mass. We have several concerns about this proposal.

The federal government owns 66% of Utah's land, compared to 10% or less in eastern and southern states. Millions of federal acres in Utah are already designated as national parks, wilderness, national monuments, or other conservation designations. In fact, 36% of federal land in Utah is protected while only 12% is leased for oil and gas. An additional 9.4 million acres will further widen the gap and reduce the potential for future economic development in rural Utah.

The Red Rock Wilderness Act would jeopardize jobs in the energy industry which are among the highest paying in the nation and are substantially higher paying than most jobs in rural Utah. Moreover, production of oil and gas on federal lands in Utah benefits the federal treasury and reduces America's dependence on foreign oil. To be clear, we are not proposing that wilderness quality lands be open for mineral extraction or oil and gas exploration.

The Utah delegation is not opposed to preserving wilderness quality lands. In fact, several members of the Utah delegation are working on a Utah lands bill based on input from state and local government officials, conservation groups, and other stakeholders. This will be a balanced bill that provides for both conservation and development opportunities in a locally-driven, transparent process. To obtain more information on this process, please contact John Tanner in Sen. Hatch's office at John_Tanner@hatch.senate.gov or Fred Ferguson in Rep. Bishop's office at Fred.Ferguson@mail.house.gov.

Signed,



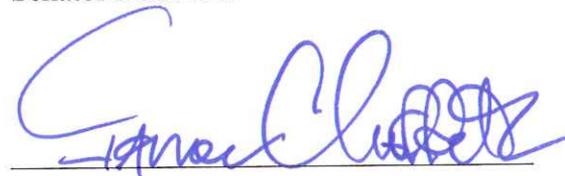
Senator Orrin Hatch



Senator Mike Lee



Representative Rob Bishop



Representative Jason Chaffetz



Representative Chris Stewart