

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

May 3, 2010

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Hastings:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, urges you to support House Resolution 1254, which would require the Secretary of Interior to disclose documents relating to potential national monuments designations, when it is brought for a vote before the full committee.

In February, an internal Department of Interior memorandum revealed that the Administration was considering designating more than 13 million acres of land in 11 Western states as national monuments under the American Antiquities Act. While the Act authorizes the President to create national monuments on federal lands, it was designed to protect very small areas of land with items of specific archeological, scientific, or historic importance. The proposed designations would seem to violate not just the intent of the Act by locking up excessively large tracts of Western land, but also this Administration's commitment to transparency by acting without any public outreach, input from state or local elected officials, or Congressional review.

Despite a written request from several Members of Congress to turn over documents related to the proposed designations, Secretary Salazar has not responded. As such, Ranking Member Hastings and Subcommittee Ranking Member Bishop were compelled to introduce this legislation in an effort to force disclosure of the documents and increase the transparency of the monument designation process.

The Chamber recognizes the need to preserve America's unique heritage through the designation of historical national monuments. Such decisions, however, should not be made behind closed doors where the selection and designation of national monuments are hidden from the public, affected stakeholders, and even Congress.

The federal government can protect national resources – and ensure that issues like domestic energy production, pipelines and transmission corridors, job creation, and public access

to federal lands are fully considered prior to making any proclamations pursuant to the Act – by being more transparent about its intentions and opening up the designation process to robust public input. At a minimum, the Administration should disclose the size and location of the proposed national monument designations, as Congress has requested.

For these reasons, the Chamber urges you to support House Resolution 1254.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten

Cc: The Members of the Committee on Natural Resources