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Feb 10 2015

Murkowski and Sullivan Fight Unilateral Land and Water Blocks by Executive Branch

Senators Introduce Critical Legislation to End Fiats, Welcome Rejection of Aleutian Sanctuary from NOAA

Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan introduced the Improved National Monument Designation Process Act today, legislation that would prohibit any White House from unilaterally designating national monuments on federal lands and waters under a century-old measure called the Antiquities Act without Congressional approval and the approval of affected state's legislatures.

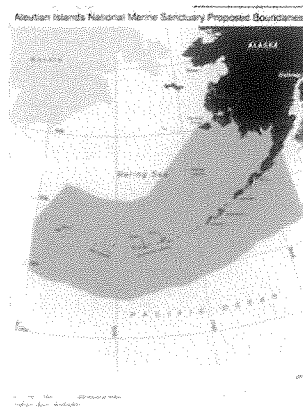
"It is clear that this White House is more concerned with securing its environmental legacy than protecting the economic well-being of Alaskans," said Murkowski, Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Co-Chair of the Senate Oceans Caucus. "My legislation is designed to make sure economic activity like fishing and responsible resource development is not put at risk – and family incomes damaged – by a stroke of the President's pen."

"How we develop and harvest America's land and water is an area where Congress and the people, not the executive branch – has preeminent authority," said Sullivan. "This legislation will put a check on the Obama administration's war on Alaska families and the middle class. Though it may be an inconvenient truth to this President, the citizens on the ground who live day in and day out with his fiats deserve to be heard."

The bill would require for any national monument proposed on public land or within the exclusive economic zone that the following requirements be met:

- Specific authorization by an Act of Congress;
- Approval by the state legislature, and for marine monuments, approval by each state legislature within 100 miles of the proposed monument; and
- Application of the National Environmental Policy Act.

NOAA Rejects Aleutian Islands Sanctuary Marine Proposal



Rejected Sanctuary Boundaries

Coastal Alaskans and Alaskan fishermen received some good news recently when an attempt by the D.C. environmental lobby to block over 550,000 square nautical miles of federal waters north and south of the Aleutian

Islands from commercial activity was rejected as being insufficient for not reflecting "community interests of Alaska from the federal and state agencies listed as potential management partners." KEYWORD SEARCH

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The sanctuary petition, which was submitted in the days before Christmas, put Alaska's coastal communities and fishing industry on high alert – with concerns about the impact such a designation would have on their way of life and opportunities for economic development. Last month, the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries notified the D.C.-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and Senator Murkowski that the application fell short in a number of areas.

While this threat of a sanctuary designation was averted, Senator Murkowski remains concerned by the possibility that President Obama could still move unilaterally to create a national monument in the same area – and for good reason. According to a Deseret News editorial this past weekend:

After his immigration executive order and his climate-change agreement with China, it's easy to see an arbitrary national monument designation as an increasingly likely next step.

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