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HJR 18 Sponsor Statement – Improved National Monuments Resolution

An unprecedented number of new national monuments have been created by the current administration in Washington D.C. While national monuments serve a worthy purpose to preserve and protect important historic landmarks and environmentally sensitive areas for future generations, the process originally created in 1906 needs to be revised.

The President of the United States has declared ten new monuments in the last 24 months without the participation and cooperation of congress and the states impacted by the designation. This unilateral process ignores the potential harm to local and regional economies and damages relationships between the three levels of government and state residents.

House Joint Resolution 18 urges the United States Congress to pass the Improved National Monument Designation Process Act (S. 437). Sponsored by Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, the legislation requires any future monument designations on public land or within the exclusive economic zone to meet three basic requirements. Congressional authorization, approval by the state legislature, and for marine national monuments, approval by each state legislature from every state within 100 miles of the proposed monument. The proposed monument would also have to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

This resolution sends a message to our elected leaders in the White House and on Capitol Hill that Alaskans have the right to participate in the national monument process. I respectfully ask for your support.

Prepared on Thursday, March 19, 2015