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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

February 28, 2017

Representative Zach Fansler, Co-chair
Representative Justin Parish, Co-chair
House Community & Regional Affairs Committee
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HJR 10, Urging the United States Congress to pass the Improved National Monument Designation Process Act.

Dear Co-chairs Fansler and Parish:

The Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. (RDC) is writing to urge passage of HJR 10, which limits the authority of the President of the United States in establishing or expanding national monuments under the Antiquities Act ("the Act").

RDC is a statewide business association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, forest products, tourism and fisheries industries. RDC's membership includes Alaska Native Corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

It is a policy of RDC to advocate for access to and across lands in Alaska for resource and community development. RDC is concerned excessive national monument designations create another level of bureaucracy inhibiting access to areas in and around Alaska.

In fact, the previous administration demonstrated that reform to the Antiquities Act is greatly needed. Although the act requires reservation of "the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected," designations made under the Obama Administration locked up more land and water than the previous 18 presidents combined. From 2009 to 2017, more than 865,000 square miles onshore and offshore were designated as national monuments, an area larger than the state of Alaska by a wide margin.

Beyond the vast size of the designations, little-to-no local consultation has taken place. The disregard for local input comes as a great threat to the tens of thousand of Alaskans working in the resource development industries that RDC represents.

The Improved National Monument Designation Process Act limits the potential for further unilateral withdrawals using the Antiquities Act by requiring authorization from Congress, gaining approval by the state legislature in which the monument is proposed, and obtaining a certification of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

RDC asserts that by requiring congressional and state approval on future national monument designations, local stakeholders will have the opportunity to be heard and the increased transparency will prevent abuse of power.

In conclusion, RDC urges the swift passage of HJR 10.

Sincerely,



Kati Capozzi
Communications & Projects Manager

Cc: Members of the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee