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Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

August 28, 2015

Senator Susan M. Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Angus S. King
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Bruce L. Poliquin
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Rochelle M. Pingree
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Collins, Senator King, Congressman Poliquin and Congresswoman Pingree:

I am writing to you due to my concerns about a growing threat to Maine's workers who rely on the State's natural resources economy. It has just come to my attention that the White House is actively exploring designating areas within the Gulf of Maine as a National Marine Monument under the Antiquities Act. Additionally, I am hearing more and more that National Park proponents are considering seeking a National Monument designation after their proposal was defeated at the polls in Medway and East Millinocket.

As you know, Congress has given the President broad powers under the Antiquities Act to designate federal land a National Monument. Fundamentally, I oppose this power because it is so sweeping and it provides few procedural protections to those who are likely to be most affected – those who rely on the natural resources-based economy. Under this power, the President has absolute discretion regarding how comments are solicited and which interests are taken into consideration before land is put off limits to commercial uses.

In addition to my general concerns, I am also opposed to the specific projects in question. A National Marine Monument putting Cashes Ledge and undersea canyons and seamounts in the Gulf of Maine off-limits to commercial fishing activity will affect Maine's offshore lobstermen, tuna fishermen, herring fishermen and groundfish fishermen. Moreover, this comes on the heels of a roughly ten-year habitat amendment process at the New England Fishery Management Council. It looks like environmental interest groups that are unhappy with that process are now going to a higher authority to upend the result achieved by the Council. Procedurally, this type of end-run is a terrible precedent.

I have been following closely the effort to create a new National Park in the Millinocket area. This is not the first time a federal takeover of the Baxter Park Area has been proposed. Unfortunately, this time we do not have Governor Baxter himself leading the charge against this maneuver as we did in the 1930s. I have been somewhat dismayed members of the Maine congressional delegation have yet to take a position on this matter, particularly in light of this summer's lopsided votes against this proposal in the towns of Medway and East Millinocket. Now, I am hearing even more troubling rumblings coming out of Washington that park



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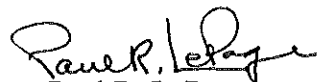
proponents are trying an end-run by seeking a National Monument designation by President Obama under the Antiquities Act.

Frankly, the more I come to learn about the National Monument process the more astounded I am. This law and the power it gives to the President is a complete abdication of Congressional authority by allowing the President unilaterally to declare land off limits. The potential for misuse of this power is concerning. In fact, this authority can create a situation like we are now facing in Maine where park proponents are considering asking the President to intercede despite the will of the Maine voters who rejected this proposal this year. Of course, this would not be the first time the liberal elite thought they knew what was best for rural Mainers.

As you all know, so much of Maine's economy relies on access to our natural resources. The President's authority under the Antiquities Act puts Mainers at risk by making these natural resources off limits. In the Millinocket area, a National Monument designation makes Maine timber off limits to the forest products industry. The National Maritime Monument designation that has just been threatened in the Gulf of Maine will harm Maine's commercial fishermen by excluding commercial fishing from certain areas of the ocean. I want to ask you to do everything in your power as our representatives in Washington to resist these efforts and to reform the Antiquities Act. Maine's natural resource-based economy cannot afford to allow the President to continue to retain this unfettered power.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor

cc: Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
House Committee on Natural Resources