



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

February 14, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to ask for your assistance in rectifying a grave injustice that has been done to the people of Maine and our forest economy. Former President Obama designated the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Northern Maine shortly before he left office, despite repeated objections by residents of the affected area through local referendums and in spite of, state legislative action. I have attached a copy of my April 22, 2016 letter to President Obama expressing clear opposition to the establishment of a national park, as well as supporting documentation. On behalf of the Maine people, I am going on record once again as opposed to the creation of a national park or monument in Northern Maine.

Regarding the national monument designation, "those cold timid souls who neither know victory or defeat" argue that you, as President, cannot undo a national monument designation because it has never been done before. They also never envisioned President Trump. I strongly urge you to undo the designation and return the land to private ownership before economic damage occurs and traditional recreational pursuits are diminished.

In the alternative, assuming the land remains in federal ownership, I believe the land should be managed by the State of Maine to ensure it can benefit all Maine people and accommodate the region's economic and recreational needs. Who better to manage a public resource in Maine than the people who live in Maine? One of the many arguments made against creation of a national park or monument is that new federal land abuts Maine's extraordinary and unique Baxter State Park. State management of the land would complement and ensure the "forever wild" status of that park without doing harm to the region and the Maine economy.

I remain hopeful and optimistic that the overwhelming support you received from voters in this region, especially those in our Second Congressional District, will result in bold policies that create jobs, restore our national identity, ensure our place in the world and make the Maine woods great again.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



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Enclosure

CC: Senator Susan Collins
Senator Angus King
Congressman Bruce Poliquin
Congresswoman Chellie Pingree



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Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

April 22, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

A year ago today, I wrote you to express my strong opposition to the creation of a National Park in the Katahdin region. I am, again, writing you to reaffirm my concerns regarding increased federal ownership of land in Maine and to inform you and your Office of how this issue has transformed over the past year.

As you know, there has been a multi-year discussion regarding the creation of a National Park in Northern Maine. This conversation heated up heading into 2016, the year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. In Maine, that conversation, however, has not gone particularly well for proponents of a National Park.

Since I wrote you a year ago today, three local communities have held municipal referenda regarding the creation of a National Park or National Monument – all three communities voted against this plan by wide margins. On June 23, 2015, the town of Medway held a local referendum, where over 70 percent of those voters rejected the creation of a National Park in Northern Maine. On June 29, 2015, the town of East Millinocket held a local referendum, where over 60 percent of those voters rejected the creation of a National Park in Northern Maine. Most recently, on April 19, 2016, the town of Patten held a local referendum, where almost 70 percent of those voters rejected the creation of a National Park or National Monument in Northern Maine. The concept simply is not catching on locally.

While local residents have been expressing their opposition to more federal ownership of land in Maine, members of Maine's Congressional delegation has responded with various reactions, from qualified support to outright opposition. I understand you received some correspondence from members of the State's Congressional delegation outlining their list of conditions that must be met before they would explore Congressional authorization to create a National Park in Maine.

Given the lack of local support for this proposal and the less than enthusiastic support by members of Maine's Congressional delegation, proponents of a National Park abruptly changed their plans in the fall of 2015. As you and your Office well know, supporters have now begun advocating for the creation of a National Monument, as opposed to a National Park. At first, I



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President Obama
April 22, 2016
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was surprised by this change because proponents of a National Park were so strongly convinced of the economic benefits that would flow from tapping into the National Park "brand" that I assumed they would never settle for National Monument status. Politics, however, is "the art of the possible" and proponents must have realized that a National Park was impossible.

In any event, this proposal has transformed, yet again, and the discussion now has shifted to the creation of a National Monument in Northern Maine. Regardless of the title, I remain steadfastly opposed to this project and to increased federal ownership of land in Maine. I am simply not convinced that a National Park or a National Monument is needed in Maine, as we already have a strong conservation ethos in this State. From the creation of Baxter State Park to current day efforts to conserve land, Mainers have worked to protect what makes our State unique. This includes close to 4 million acres of conserved land held in fee or easement by public and private entities. We are already doing this work, without the help of the federal government.

Of course, I am not the only person in Maine government strongly opposed to the creation of a National Monument in Northern Maine. This year, a majority of the Maine Legislature also saw fit to act in opposition to a National Monument - this includes the Democratically controlled Maine House. Just this month, I signed LD 1600 into law after receiving this bill from the Legislature. A copy of this bill, which revokes Maine's consent for the federal government to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over a National Monument in this State, is attached.

While I appreciate that under the Antiquities Act, you are the sole decision maker regarding the designation of National Monuments, I did want to provide you and your Office with these developments regarding this matter in Maine. As you can see, support at the local, state and even federal level, through Maine's Congressional delegation, is minimal at best. Please consider this information and my strong opposition to the creation of a National Monument as your Office continues to be lobbied on this issue.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Senator Susan M. Collins
Senator Angus S. King
Congressman Bruce L. Poliquin
Congresswoman Rochelle M. Pingree
Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director, CEQ

APPROVED

APRIL 12, 2016

BY GOVERNOR

CHAPTER

458

PUBLIC LAW

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND SIXTEEN

H.P. 1091 - L.D. 1600

An Act Regarding Consent to Land Transfers to the Federal Government

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §15 is amended to read:

§15. Consent of Legislature to acquisition of land by United States for public buildings; record of conveyances

In accordance with the Constitution of the United States, Article 1, Section VIII, Clause 17, and Acts of Congress in such cases provided, the consent of the Legislature is given to the acquisition by the United States, or under its authority, by purchase, condemnation or otherwise, of any land in this State required for the erection of lighthouses or for sites for customhouses, courthouses, post offices, arsenals or other public buildings, or for any other purposes of the government, except for the designation of property as a national monument pursuant to 54 United States Code, Section 320301 (2015). Deeds and conveyances or title papers for the same shall must be recorded upon the land records of the county or registry district in which the land so conveyed may lie; and in like manner may be recorded a sufficient description by metes and bounds, courses and distances, of any tracts and legal divisions of any public lands belonging to the United States set apart by the general government for either of the purposes before mentioned, by an order, patent or other official paper so describing such land.