

Time and again, the Trump administration is pushing for policies that are harmful to our recreation economy and a disaster for our pristine places, and it sets a terrible precedent for future conservation efforts.

The Antiquities Act is one of our Nation's most successful conservation laws. It was signed into law in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt to designate Devils Tower in Wyoming as our Nation's first national monument.

In the 110 years since its enactment, the Antiquities Act has been a very useful tool by 16 different Presidents—eight Republicans, eight Democrats—to designate more than 140 national monuments, including, as I mentioned, the San Juan Islands and Hanford Reach in the State of Washington.

Nearly half of all of our national parks, including national icons such as the Grand Canyon or Olympic National Park, were first designated as national monuments under the Antiquities Act. So it is a very helpful tool to making sure we preserve those special places. I will note, too, that only 4 percent of all land in the United States is set aside this way, designated as part of the national park system or as a national monument.

So, of all the lands in the United States, we are asking to protect 4 percent of the lands, that are these unique special places, to be persevered for the American public and not turned over to special interests for oil and gas mining.

I also think it is important to note that the Antiquities Act gives the President the authority to make sure that these monuments are designated because from time to time there are those who do not believe in these special places.

I note that when the Grand Canyon was being considered, an editorial in that time period editorialized: "The idea of protecting the Grand Canyon represents a fiendish and diabolical scheme." Now, I don't think that is what Americans think today about the Grand Canyon, nor do they think that it is something that hasn't enriched the lives of millions of Americans over the years or added to our economy and tourism. So I find it ironic that the same people think that the designation of Bears Ears is somehow a "fiendish and diabolical scheme."

Well, what I know is that the President is wrong to think he can use the Antiquities Act in reverse. In 1938, an Attorney General's opinion was issued stating that the President did not have the authority to use it in reverse.

So I think any attempt by the Trump administration to modify or revoke earlier national monument proposals is without the legal authority to do so. But I also want to make sure that we are talking about how important and how special Bears Ears is. It is a monument of true significance. It encompasses 1.3 million acres of beautiful desert hills, mesas, and sandstone canyons in southeastern Utah and is home to some of the most spiritually signifi-

cant lands of the local Tribes and some of the best rock climbing in the world.

Bears Ears encompasses Native American archaeological sites dating back at least 13,000 years. The area is covered in rock art, petroglyphs and pictographs, cliff dwellings, and artifacts. So if nothing else, those special places should be preserved.

It is also special to many of the early inhabitants of that area: the Ute Tribe, the Navajo Tribe, the Uintah Ouray Tribe, the Hopi Tribe, and the Zuni Tribe. Bears Ears is important to these Tribal members for sacred ceremonies, and hunting, and fishing.

Bears Ears also continues to be one of the richest paleontological resources in our Nation, with fossil records dating back millions of years. So it is easy to see why it is so important that this special place was designated.

In addition to its historical and cultural significance, Bears Ears is also a world-class recreation resource visited by rock climbers from all over the world. It is also visited by hunters, hikers, canyoneers, white water rafters, mountain bikers, and the entire conservation community. That is why the Outdoor Retailer show, which had previously located its biannual event in Utah, decided after two decades that they were pulling out. That is right. They are pulling out their \$40 million contribution to the Utah economy because they are against the efforts by many in Utah to oppose the Bears Ears monument and try to get the President to reverse the Antiquities Act and then use that Federal land for oil and gas exploration. I was so proud to see the outdoor industry take such a bold step. Companies like REI, Patagonia, Black Diamond, and Outdoor Research really made a big and bold statement. They decided that if a State was going to attack the very economy that was so important to their jobs in recreation, they were going to do something about it.

I agree with the Salt Lake Tribune editorial on the Outdoor Retailer's decision, which said that the debate over public lands is about "who we are and where we are headed. To get there, we need leaders with a better appreciation of the magnificent gifts God has given everyone, not just Utahans."

So what is ironic and, frankly, a bit sad is that at the same time the Trump administration is waging war on our public lands and fighting imaginary ones, like the War on Coal, we have new data on just what an economic engine the recreation industry has become. Just today, the Outdoor Industry Association released a new report on the economic contributions of the recreation economy. Today, the recreation industry generates \$887 billion in consumer spending every year. That is up more than \$200 billion—from \$646 billion—since the last time the study was done a few years ago. What does this tell us? Not only do more Americans enjoy recreation on our public lands, but an economy has been built

around it, and it continues to grow and thrive, with new products, new services, and more comfortable and innovative ways to enjoy the outdoors. The outdoor recreation economy is responsible for 7.6 million jobs in this country. That is a growth of 1.5 million jobs since the last time the report was done.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration seems perfectly content to do the bidding of these natural resources industries instead of focusing on these jobs and these recreational opportunities that are booming. In fact, the clean energy economy is now supporting more jobs than fossil fuels in 26 States and the District of Columbia. So it is an economy that exists in many parts of our country.

On top of this effort to try and weaken these national monument designations and use the Antiquities Act in reverse, the President is also expected to gut some of our key investments in science and innovation that are also helping us grow in new ways.

I will tell you that pollution is not an economic strategy. We cannot turn the economy of the past into hope for the future. What we need to do is make sure we are paying attention to the unique resources that these special places represent and the great heritage of both Democratic and Republican administrations, which have done great work by protecting places like the Grand Canyon and Bears Ears.

I hope all of my colleagues will realize that this is a futile effort and that these special places do not belong only to us. They do not belong to the people who are here on the Senate floor. They belong to generations and generations of Americans.

To those great Presidents—Republican and Democratic—who made those decisions and created those special places for all of us, thank you. I hope that some future generation will be standing here thanking us for protecting Bears Ears and all of the national monument designations that have taken place over the last two decades.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Michigan farmers. Agriculture is a vital part of Michigan's economy. In fact, Michigan is home to more than 51,000 farms that contribute over \$100 billion to our Nation's economy. Michigan is also the second most diverse agricultural producer in the Nation, growing more than 300 commodities, including a significant portion of our Nation's milk, corn, cherries, cucumbers, and much more.

Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Iciek Dairy Farm in Gladwin, MI. It was incredible to see firsthand how this family-run dairy has grown from a small farm of a few dozen cows to a large, modern dairy operation with 700 cows and seven full-time employees.

Today, the Iciek Dairy works with the Michigan State University Extension program to help mentor new businesses and farmers who are just starting off with their own small dairy operation. Michigan's farmers and farmers all across our country feed our country and people around the globe, and we must do what we can to support them. Our agricultural businesses rely on the ability to access the resources they need to keep growing, creating jobs, and contributing to our economy.

Access to these resources can be especially challenging for new small farm operations that are just getting started, including those small farms that make up 82 percent of Michigan's agricultural producers. Small farms that are just starting up or are facing tough economic conditions sometimes struggle to find and secure affordable credit. That is why I am working across the aisle with Senator TILLIS to urge congressional appropriators to fully fund the Farm Service Agency loan programs as Congress considers government funding bills for 2018.

The Farm Service Agency works with lenders to guarantee and deliver small dollar loans to the small farms that need them the most. When a farm has no other options, Farm Service Agency loans and guarantees can help farmers cover urgent operating costs for feed, seed, and fertilizer to get them through the season. Without these loans, farmers could lose their ability to purchase equipment and other necessities for the planting season and could be forced to curtail their operations.

Currently, more than 2,300 farms in Michigan have Farm Service Agency loans totaling over \$630 million. Across the country last year, the Farm Service Agency made and guaranteed a total of 39,650 loans totaling \$6.3 billion. It is critical that Farm Service Agency funding reflect expected demand for loans so that small farms can continue to have this crucial lifeline.

This program is in such high demand that just last year the Farm Service Agency ran out of money to finance its operating loans, including more than 1,000 loans that had already been approved for small farmers. This led to a backlog of loans, and farmers were forced to wait for months until Congress passed emergency funding to get the loans they needed for their day-to-day operations.

Access to capital is critical across a range of businesses, but it is incredibly important to our farmers. They can lose out on an entire growing season if they cannot buy the equipment and the supplies they need while they wait for Congress to fund the Farm Service Agency.

Today, ensuring that the Farm Service Agency has sufficient funding is even more critical, especially following President Trump's proposed \$4.7 billion cut to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Like our small businesses, students, and families, America's farmers deserve to have affordable loan options, and they deserve our attention and our support. I urge my colleagues to join me in asking for robust Farm Service Agency funding so we can continue to support our farming communities as they support and sustain us each and every day.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as we come back into session after a 2-week State work period, I think we need to take stock of what we have been able to accomplish in working together during the last few months.

Through the efforts of the administration and in working with Congress, we have been able to greatly lessen the regulatory burden on many American job creators, which is something sorely needed while our economy has been bumping along at, roughly, 2 percent growth of our gross domestic product since the Great Recession of 2008. We have confirmed a ninth Supreme Court Justice, and we have seen strong, credible action taken against people like the terrible Assad regime in Syria.

It is important to remember, as folks continue to judge the current administration and its foreign policy in particular, how we got here and what this White House inherited after 8 years of the Obama administration.

As President Obama left office, he left in his wake fires burning around the world. There is no better example than the Middle East. President Obama celebrated the Arab Spring as a testament to the power of a democratic voice, but he did little to help our partners across the Middle East and North Africa find stability and prosperity. Along the way, he made the world a lot more dangerous for all of us by his inaction or, in some cases, by his actions. Libya is one of the most tragic examples.

Without his coming to Congress but instead going to the United Nations for a resolution, under President Obama's watch, the country fractured after he helped to launch a poorly conceived military campaign that helped depose Muammar Qadhafi, with no plan at all as to what to do afterward to stabilize the country. Apparently, despite all of President Obama's criticisms of President Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq, he learned very little from it, and terror-

ists, including ISIS, jumped at the opportunity to fill the vacuum in Libya.

Later, the American Consulate in Benghazi would be attacked, resulting in the deaths of four Americans, including that of Ambassador Christopher Stevens. That was the result of President Obama's failed strategy in Libya.

To the east, as 2016 came to a close, Syria was embroiled in even more disarray, more bloodshed, and more violence than when the civil war initially broke out. President Obama promised the world—now infamously—that should the Syrian Government use chemical weapons that at that point a red line would have been crossed. We know how that turned out and so do the citizens of Syria and so do, importantly, other thugs, autocrats, and dictators around the world—red lines crossed but not enforced.

President Obama's threats went unanswered. Russia became bolder in its support of Assad as it became clearer that the United States would not intervene. Now, in light of years of inaction by the previous administration, we have a refugee crisis in the Middle East and throughout Europe. Millions of people have been displaced both internally and externally across Europe. We have a war criminal leading the Syrian Government who has repeatedly used chemical weapons and indiscriminately killed civilians, including children, in a region even further from any measure of stability than when President Obama took office.

Yet, instead of developing a strategy, instead of listening to his own military and national security leadership, President Obama and his team perversely opted to strengthen our adversary Iran. The ill-conceived JCPOA deal cemented the status of this state sponsor of terrorism as a future nuclear power as it released billions of dollars in sanctions relief to the regime and empowered our enemy to engage in even more terrorist activities abroad and around the world. After 8 years of the Obama administration, the bottom line is, our foremost enemy in the Middle East became stronger, not weaker.

On top of all of that, President Obama pushed aside our strongest ally in the region—Israel—time and time again to appease nations that were working against us. That is simply not how the United States should operate in its leadership role around the world.

I could go on and on about the foreign policy failures of the last administrations with respect to the Middle East, but it is not the only region in worse shape. Under President Obama's watch, Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine. It repeatedly threatened NATO member states and ramped up its cyber espionage to influence and undermine public confidence in free and fair elections both in the United States and in Europe. Along the way, our allies in Europe were cast aside rather than assured of our support—all with Russia's mounting aggression close by.