



March 18, 2013

Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman, Subcommittee
on Natural Resources and Public Lands
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter regarding The Wilderness Society's priorities for Utah's public lands.

We appreciate your interest in advancing public lands legislation that benefits Utahns and all Americans who enjoy the state's wonderful natural resources. We also appreciate you reaching out to The Wilderness Society to better understand our priorities.

The Wilderness Society works on behalf of our 500,000 members and supporters to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for their wild places. We have a long-standing interest in Utah's public lands, and have worked for decades to ensure that the state's natural treasures are preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Our highest priority is the permanent protection of more of Utah's unmatched wildlands through wilderness designation or other appropriate conservation designations. We are particularly interested in four of the state's most iconic landscapes: Desolation Canyon and the Book Cliffs, Cedar Mesa, the San Rafael Swell, and the Canyonlands region. The wilderness-caliber public lands within these four great landscapes are national treasures, and should be preserved in perpetuity. Secondly, we strongly support state-federal land exchanges as a tool to enhance the conservation and wildlife values of these landscapes while also consolidating state ownership in areas less sensitive for development. Finally, we encourage you to consider a landscape approach in the development of a public lands proposal that considers the conservation and protection of deserving wildlands while also considering where energy development and other land uses are appropriate.

Additionally, we ask that you consider a facilitated process that can help achieve the consensus necessary to advance legislation. As you know, Utah public lands legislation has the potential to be quite controversial. Strong and diverse stakeholder support will greatly increase the potential for legislative success. A neutral professional facilitator could be very helpful in achieving that result.

Again, thank you for your leadership and including The Wilderness Society in your outreach. We look forward to working with you on this important venture.

Sincerely,

James C. Williams, President