

September 28, 2009

Dear Member of Congress,

Many people of faith find spiritual renewal in the wilderness. In doing so, they follow the same path walked by Moses who spoke with God in the wilderness of the Sinai and Jesus who was baptized in the wilderness of the Jordan River and numerous others of many faiths. Through Creation God nourishes life and provides blessings of sustenance. Special places, deserving of wilderness designation, provide a space for prayer and for retaining the vessels which sustain God's gift of life. The red rock canyon lands of Utah are among these treasures.

The wilderness of southern and central Utah, with its wide open spaces, spectacular vistas, and intimate slot canyons, constitutes one of the largest remaining networks of undesignated wild lands in the lower 48 states. These federal lands have wild, rugged characteristics where visitors can enjoy a remote experience iconic of the western United States, in addition to affording preservation of wildlife and retaining opportunities for hiking, camping, hunting, scientific study, prayer, and spiritual reflection. Also protected would be a vast array of archeological resources and places sacred to Native Americans. As in many other locales, the protection of this land will also provide a sustainable economic foundation for the people who live amidst God's bounty. **As such, we urge you to support the American Red Rocks Wilderness Act (S. 799, H.R. 1925).**

God's lands are an integral part of Creation. Lands and wilderness provide refuge for the body and soul, offer blessings of sustenance like soil and water, and serve as stunning reminders of God's power and grace in our lives. As part of our call to be stewards of Creation, we have a duty to use the land responsibly, to manage it so that it serves the good of all, and to protect it for future generations and for all life. These lands are especially deserving of the protection afforded by the federal government, keeping it as it is today for our families and for future generations.

Stewardship of lands and wild places that God has entrusted to our care is both a critical part of our call to protect Creation and a responsibility shared by all citizens. We, as people of faith, call upon Congress to establish this kind of recognition, through the American Red Rocks Wilderness Act, giving permanent protection to this vital part of God's miraculous Creation.

Sincerely,

The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
National Council of Churches in Christ, USA  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society