

September 22, 2009

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman, Subcommittee on Parks and Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6201

Dear Chairman Rahall and Grijalva,

We are writing to express our support for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act and thank you for adding it to the hearing schedule in the House Committee on Natural Resources. After so many years, it is time to give Utah wilderness a fair chance and a hearing for the Red Rock bill is a good place to start. In view of our changing climate and the resulting drought, dust storms, shrinking water supplies and biodiversity loss, we believe there is little time to waste when it comes to ensuring the survival of our special places for future generations to enjoy. Protection of Utah's wilderness landscapes will also ensure that Utah has the resources to build a stable economy based on recreation, tourism and the outdoor industry.

You have the support of many Utahns who would like to see the beautiful, natural landscapes of southern Utah – like the Book Cliffs, the San Rafael Swell and the West Desert – protected for the benefit of future generations. For this reason it is time for Congress to give Utah wilderness a full and fair hearing. Passage of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act would permanently protect the vast landscapes of scenic wonders like Cedar Mesa, whose first inhabitants occupied its canyons thousands of years ago and where ancient artifacts are in desperate need of protection. In total, this legislation would preserve over 9 million acres of Utah's incomparable red rock canyonlands, pristine Mojave Desert, and vast Basin and Range wilderness.

The public lands within our state are an unmatched resource. While these are lands of many different uses, from recreation to development, recently we have witnessed certain uses given priority over others. It is important for Utah and this nation that we appropriately balance these uses of public lands. America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, has been a beacon of hope for Utahns who have waited all too long to see the wilderness issue addressed. We greatly appreciate your efforts to aid in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Representative Phil Riesen
Representative Jennifer Seelig
Representative Laura Black
Representative Rebecca Chavez-Houck
Representative David Litvak
Representative Mark Wheatley
Representative Janice Fisher
Representative Carol Spackman Mass

Senator Luz Robles

Senator Gene Davis

Sherrie Swensen, Salt Lake County Clerk

Phillip Bimstein, former Mayor of Springdale

Joe Hatch, Salt Lake County Councilman