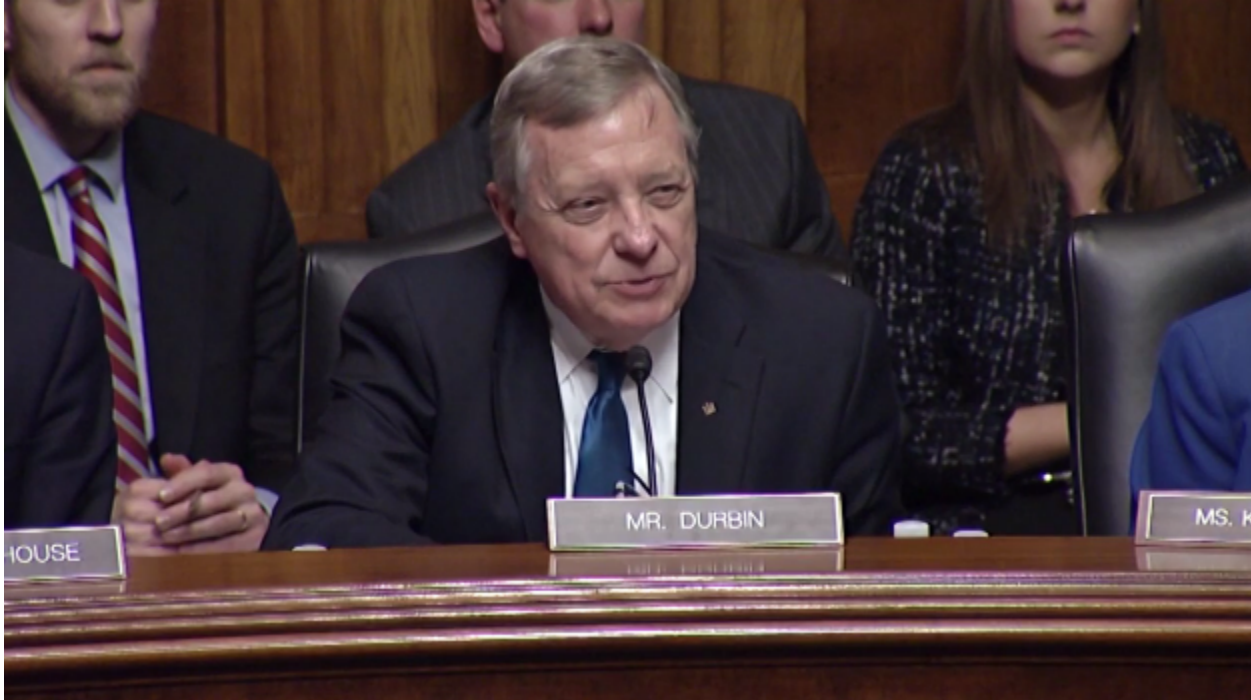


Durbin, Duckworth introduce act to protect America's National Monuments

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) to introduce the America's Natural Treasures of Immeasurable Quality Unite, Inspire, and Together Improve the Economies of States (ANTIQUITIES) Act of 2019. This legislation will protect America's national monuments against the Trump administration's relentless attacks on public lands and reinforces Congress' clear intent in the Antiquities Act of 1906: only Congress has the authority to modify a national monument designation.

The ANTIQUITIES Act comes in response to President Trump's attempt to eliminate two million acres of protections for Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments — the largest rollback of federally protected lands in American history. President Trump took this action despite the fact that Americans across the country overwhelmingly voiced support for keeping the monuments intact. During the administration's public comment process, more than 99 percent of the 2.8 million comments received were in favor of maintaining existing protections for our national monuments.

“Simply put, the Trump Administration's attacks on our national monuments far exceeds their authority,” said Durbin. “The Constitution gives Congress important powers over federal lands, and we must protect these national treasures from ruin so they can be enjoyed by future generations of Americans.”

“Our national monuments and public lands are essential for wildlife preservation, environmental protection and outdoor enjoyment,” said Duckworth. “I'm proud to join Senator Udall, Senator Durbin and my colleagues in this effort to defend our national parks against the Trump Administration's attacks.”

Durbin and Duckworth are among the 118 Members of Congress questioning the validity of these reductions in court. Members have additionally filed an amicus brief, reaffirming that only Congress has this power to change or alter monuments.

National monuments and America's protected public lands help fuel an \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry, which sustains 7.6 million jobs and creates \$65.3 billion in federal tax revenue and \$59.2 billion in local and state tax revenue.

S. 367, the ANTIQUITIES Act of 2019, protects and enhances national monuments with three main provisions:

- It officially declares Congress' support for the 52 national monuments established by presidents in both parties between January 1996 and October 2018 under their authority established by the Antiquities Act of 1906.
- It reinforces that existing law clearly states that presidential proclamations designating national monuments are valid and cannot be reduced or diminished, except by an act of Congress.
- It further enhances protections for the presidentially designated national monuments by:
 - 1) requiring that they be surveyed, mapped and that management plans be completed in two years—in the same manner as congressionally designated national monuments—and;
 - 2) that they receive additional resources to ensure that they will continue to meet their full potential of providing unmatched economic, recreational, and cultural benefits to their states and to the nation.

The bill also expands protection for the Bears Ears National Monument to more than 1.9 million acres, directing that it be composed of the lands identified in the Bears Ears Tribal Coalition's original proposal. In addition, it would designate more than 249,000 acres of federal public lands in New Mexico as wilderness and add over 111,000 acres of wilderness in southern Nevada, building on the monument protections in these states. This legislation preserves opportunities for hunting, tourism, scientific research, conservation, and cultural uses in national monuments and ensures they are properly resourced.

In addition to Durbin and Duckworth, the ANTIQUITIES Act is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Tom Udall (D-NM), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tina Smith (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Patty Murray (D-WA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Michael Bennet (D-CO), and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM-03), Ruben Gallego (D-AZ-07), and 75 other members of the House of Representatives.

Groups supporting the legislation include the National Parks Conservation Association, Conservation Lands Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness

Society, League of Conservation Voters, EarthJustice, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, Grand Canyon Trust and the Bears Ears Coalition Tribes (Hopi, Navajo, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni).