

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2019

President George W. Bush
PO Box 259000
Dallas, Texas 75225

Dear President Bush:

I write to request your presence before the Committee on Natural Resources on the topic of presidential monument designations and the Antiquities Act. Your perspective would be uniquely informative for our members and the public.

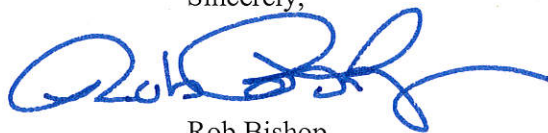
As you know, the Antiquities Act allows Presidents to unilaterally designate national monuments on federal lands without public participation. The statute does not lay out any public process requirements, nor are designations subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which normally governs major federal actions. There are, however, several limitations on this power. One relates to the size of a monument, which “shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.” Presidents increasingly ignore Congress’s clear intent in this regard.

Your Presidency was responsible for the innovation of the “marine monument.” Through four monuments – the Papahānaumokuākea, Marianas Trench, Pacific Remote Islands, and Rose Atoll Marine National Monuments – you designated over 335,000 square miles of ocean. While each of these designations included specific prohibitions, generally all commercial economic activity is banned within these monuments. These permanent, unilateral designations lack the level of scientific rigor, direct industry input, transparency, and deliberation that is essential to sound, scientifically-based policymaking decisions.

You are not totally to blame for these unfortunate circumstances. The fact that such a law even exists is an indictment against Congress for vesting vast, unilateral authority in a single person while foregoing a transparent and public-driven process. As we seek to improve these processes, your perspective would be of tremendous value to our members and the public.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Rob Bishop
Ranking Republican
House Committee on Natural Resources