

**Dissenting Views on H.R. 2889, Oregon Caves National  
Monument Boundary Adjustment Act of 2009  
The Honorable Rob Bishop (R-UT), Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands**

Unless amended, I oppose H.R. 2889 in its current form for substantive policy reasons. This legislation reflects a continuing effort by the Committee on Natural Resources under the Democrats to lock up our federal lands not just from mechanized recreation and extractive resource development but also from sensible forest and land management practices.

The area that will be added to the Oregon Caves National Monument is currently managed by the Forest Service, and its knowledgeable active management expertise is badly needed in an area that is merely 10 miles away from the cataclysmic 2002 Biscuit Forest Fire. This will likely cease under the anti-management ideology of the National Park Service.

This concern is emphasized in the communication I received from the Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association. David Schott, Executive Vice President, wrote:

The threat of devastating fire destroying the Monument and all it affords would increase significantly if such an expansion were to take place. The Oregon Caves National Monument sits on almost 500 acres of land in a very secluded and unpopulated part of Josephine County, Oregon. It is located within a very few miles of the site of the devastating Biscuit Fire of 2002. It is located in an area that is extremely dry in the summer and an area that receives a high concentration of lightning strikes during the dry hot summer months. In short, it is in a location that is very prone to forest fires that could be of the most catastrophic kind. The only way by which we can minimize the threat of fire to the Oregon Caves National Monument is to actively manage the surrounding forestlands. If the Monument is increased to 4000 acres, such management would not be permitted. It is only through well planned thinning and brush abatement that the threat of fire can be

mitigated. That won't happen within the Monument, whatever its ultimate size.

I am also concerned that although the bill allows hunting to continue, it would be managed by the Park Service who historically has been extremely hostile to hunting and other consumptive uses.

Further, by including language that would allow the Secretary of the Interior to end grazing on this land, the supporters of this bill are interfering with the valid existing property rights of a grazing lease holder. Although the sponsor of this bill reports that the lease holder is currently in negotiations to sell his lease, Congress should let the negotiations proceed on a voluntary basis rather than unfairly providing the weapon of unilateral action to one party.

I am also concerned that national parks are increasingly being used by litigation-prone environmental activists and by some in the National Park Service to control activities outside the Congressionally-determined boundaries of parks. De facto buffer zones have been used to interfere with activities such as energy projects that are planned near and even far from national parks. To restrain this particular abuse, I offered amendments to prevent the park designation from being misused to prohibit construction and maintenance of power generating facilities - whether coal-fired, wind, or solar. With some people opposed to almost any new power facility and others opposed only to those near their backyard, this has been an escalating problem, and the National Park Service has participated in killing or delaying affordable and renewable energy production from coast to coast. Unfortunately, Committee Democrats rejected these common-sense amendments on nearly party-line votes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Schott', with a long, sweeping underline.

Attachment, Letter from David Schott, Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association

To: Representative Hastings  
Re: H.R. 2889  
Oregon Caves Monument Expansion

My name is David Schott and I'm currently employed as the Executive Vice President of the Southern Oregon Timber Industries Assn. I have held this position for approximately 5 years. I am also self employed as a lumber wholesaler and with my siblings I also own two ranches in the Cascade Mountain foothills just 30 miles northeast of Medford. I am a lifelong resident of Southern Oregon having been born here some 62 + years ago. I mention that because I am exceedingly aware of the forest fire conditions that exist in our part of the state. Over the last twenty years we have seen increasingly severe fire conditions which culminated with the Biscuit Fire in 2002. That fire consumed almost 500,000 acres (780 square miles) of both national forestland and Wilderness Area land. The Kalmiopsis Wilderness area was ravaged by this fire with almost 190,000 acres (300 sq mi) having been laid waste. That Wilderness Area is currently in an utterly devastated condition for the most part. Further, parts of it has burned at least twice in the last 20 years.

Now legislation is being proposed with HR 2889 that would increase the size of the Oregon Caves National Monument by a factor of almost 9 (480 acres increased to 4000 acres).

I am completely against the effort to increase the size of the Monument. The threat of devastating fire destroying the Monument and all that it affords would increase significantly if such an expansion were to take place.

The Oregon Caves National Monument sits on almost 500 acres of land in a very secluded and unpopulated part of Josephine County, Oregon. It is located within a very few miles of the site of the devastating Biscuit Fire of 2002. It is located in an area that is extremely dry in the summer and an area that receives a high concentration of lightening strikes during the dry hot summer months. In short, it is in a location that is very prone to forest fires that could be of the most catastrophic kind. The only way by which we can minimize the threat of fire to the Oregon Caves National Monument is to actively manage the surrounding forestlands. If the Monument is increased to 4000 acres, such management would not be permitted. It is only through well planned thinning and brush abatement that the threat of fire can be mitigated. That won't happen within the Monument, whatever its ultimate size.

I need you to realize that there is a growing and persistent effort on the part of environmental organizations to incrementally increase the numbers of acres in protected forest reserves. In this part of the state, there are active efforts to put hundreds of thousands of acres off limit to all uses other than foot or horseback access. One of these efforts which currently is underway is the Siskiyou Monument expansion which is being proposed by the Klamath/Siskiyou Wildlands group. The proposal is to increase the newly formed Siskiyou Monument from 60,000 acres to over 650,000 acres. Much of this proposed expansion would come very close to the lands in question in HR 2889. Again I would submit that the long range ramifications of putting more areas in reserves will subject our forests to increasingly severe fire susceptibility. Doing so would be ludicrous.

Another result of placing lands into reserves is that cattle grazing would ultimately be eliminated. Having run cattle on the open range myself for many years I can attest to the fact that grasses and other fire fuels are kept to a minimum through grazing and that private timberland owners are universally pleased that such grazing helps keep fire danger to a minimum on their lands.

There is no question that environmental groups are attempting to have more and more of the publically owned forestland put into forest reserves of some type (eg. Monument, Roadless, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic). Somewhere, sometime, enough has to be enough. In the last days of the Clinton presidency, he and his administration created 58 million acres of defacto wilderness by declaring that this 2% of the US landmass was to now be "Roadless". That effectively, for all practical purposes, put it off limits for almost all uses. That, by the way, was a real fiction in that there are thousands and thousands of miles of roads throughout those "Roadless" designated lands.

What we have seen happen is that in the efforts to "protect" these lands, we have actually placed them increasingly at extreme risk of catastrophic fire. Further we have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs due to the "locking up" of our national forestlands. By actively managing our national forestlands we could bring thousands of jobs back to the private sector. Unfortunately, we are not managing our forestlands in any kind of effective manner and we are not creating jobs.

Four thousand acres in this instance is not a lot of acreage but I would submit that the risk of losing vast amounts of acreage, and the loss of critical habitat that goes with it, far outweighs the miniscule benefit of increasing the size of this Monument. Please consider that there are extreme ramifications by actions such as these.

Very truly yours

David R. Schott  
Exec VP 541 7735329  
Southern Oregon Timber Industries Assn and woodland owner