

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to ask you to use your presidential powers to transfer jurisdiction of the Giant Sequoia National Monument to the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

The intent of national monuments is to protect important features of areas that have cultural importance, prehistoric prominence, and/or important scientific and ecological significance. It was pressure from citizen groups, organizations, and members of the Congress at the beginning of the 20th century, according to Gerald W. Williams, Ph.D., U.S.D.A. Forest Service in *National Monuments and the Forest Service*, that eventually spurred Congress to pass the Antiquities Act in 1906. This Act gave the President the power to “combat the increasing acts of vandalism and even destruction” of important cultural and natural areas around the country by designating national monuments. One of its first uses was when President Teddy Roosevelt designated the Grand Canyon a U.S. National Monument on January 11, 1908.

No national monument in the United States could more perfectly fit this definition than Giant Sequoia National Monument. It contains the unique Sequoia forest ecosystems centered around the Sequoias, the largest trees in the world, indeed, the Earth’s largest living individual organisms, which are also some of the tallest and oldest trees on Earth, and which occur naturally only in this one area of the world. Additionally, the Sequoia groves contain rare species and many sites containing historical artifacts from various eras of human occupation dating to the prehistoric. Giant Sequoia National Monument contains 50% of the world’s remaining giant Sequoias.

Prior to 2000, these 327,769 acres of Sequoia groves were called Sequoia National Forest and were managed for timber production by the U.S. Forest Service, which for decades allowed aggressive logging in the Sequoia groves that supplied four nearby lumber mills with a continuous supply of timber. The Forest Service, proud of its logging programs in the Sequoia forests, erected “educational” markers along a Sequoia grove visitor trail explaining and illustrating the different stages of timber production, from logging trees to milling them in the timber mills.

It was this destruction to the Sequoias by the Forest Service logging program that led President Clinton on April 15, 2000 to use his powers under the Antiquities Act to designate the Sequoia groves and the surrounding forest of the Sequoia National Forest as the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Clinton's Proclamation stated "No portion of the monument shall be considered to be suited for timber production..." and "No new roads or trails will be authorized within the monument except to further the purposes of the monument." Despite President Clinton's designation of the Giant Sequoia National Monument in 2000, the Forest Service continued logging.

In 2004, in the premier tourist spot in the Monument known as the Trail of 100 Giants, the Forest Service closed access to the public for a year and conducted logging operations. When the site was reopened the following year, hundreds of giant trees, including 300-year-old sugar pines, and hundreds of smaller trees had been logged under Forest Service direction, destroying the natural character of this world-famous Sequoia grove. In protest, on October 13, 2006, 29 members of the House of Representatives wrote to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service pointing out that the logging was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, and demanded that the Forest Service end logging operations in the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

But logging continued throughout the National Monument, including large-tree removal, falsely labeled as "hazard tree" projects. The Burton Timber Sale included construction of twelve miles of new roads, although new roads are prohibited by the Monument Proclamation.

Five citizen groups had sued the Forest Service for its illegal management plan for the Giant Sequoia National Monument, and in 2006 a federal judge ruled that the Forest Service plan was in violation of NEPA. The judge required the Forest Service to write a new plan and also halted logging on the timber sales that remained.

In September 2010, 48 members of Congress wrote to the Chief of the Forest Service and to the Supervisor of the Sequoia National Forest criticizing the *new* Giant Sequoia National Monument management plan just released by the Forest Service, which would allow continued and even *increased* logging. The new plan draft would enable the destructive Ice, Saddle, and White River Timber Sales to be completed and would implement salvage logging and "hazard tree" logging without scientific basis and without complying with the letter and protective intent of the Monument Proclamation.

The logging and road building in the Sequoia groves *after* they were proclaimed a national monument in 2000 bring to mind an incident told in *National Monuments and the Forest Service*. The author relates how in 1943 President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Jackson Hole National Monument, turning over management of this federal land from the Forest Service to the National Park Service. In retaliation, the local staff of the Forest Service ripped out the plumbing and telephone equipment before turning their office over to the Park Service. This Forest Service behavior seems all too similar to the logging which caused irreparable ecological damage in 2004 in the Trail of

100 Giants, the very spot where President Clinton signed the proclamation creating the Monument.

After more than a decade of destructive logging and road-building by the Forest Service in Giant Sequoia National Monument, and after repeated failures to produce an environmentally sound and legal management plan for the Monument or to comply with federal court orders, the Forest Service has demonstrated it has neither the intention nor the institutional ability to protect this American national ecological treasure.

Clearly, the time is long overdue for transfer of authority to the National Park Service, an agency with a 120-year record of properly managing the unique Sequoia ecosystems in Sequoia, Yosemite, and Kings Canyon National Parks, with the purpose of protecting the Sequoia forests and on behalf of the American people, not for a few local timber interests.

Therefore, we the undersigned ask you to use your presidential powers to transfer jurisdiction of the Giant Sequoia National Monument to the National Park Service immediately, in order to protect this irreplaceable national and worldwide jewel for future generations of Americans.

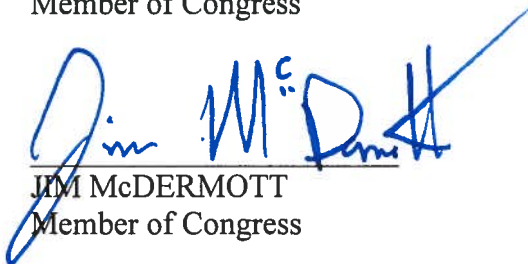
Sincerely,



SAM FARR
Member of Congress



RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



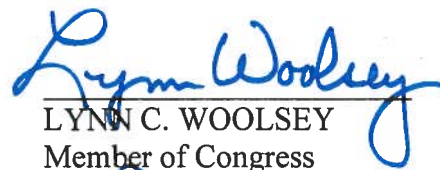
JIM McDERMOTT
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



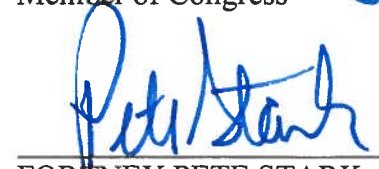
JOHN W. OLVER
Member of Congress



LYNN C. WOOLSEY
Member of Congress



MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress



FORTNEY PETE STARK
Member of Congress



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress



JESSE L. JACKSON JR.
Member of Congress



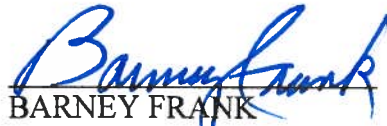
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



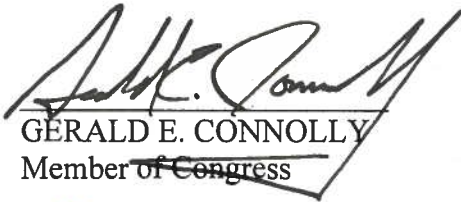
MAURICE HINCHEY
Member of Congress



MICHAEL M. HONDA
Member of Congress



BARNEY FRANK
Member of Congress



GERALD E. CONNOLLY
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



BOB FILNER
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ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress



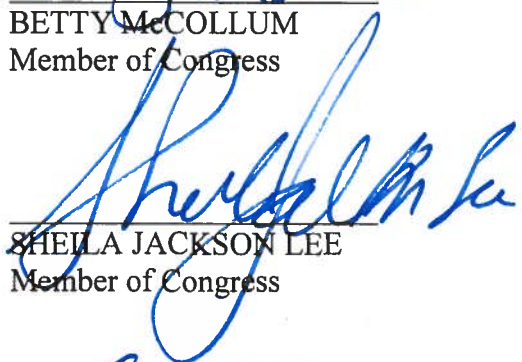
ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress



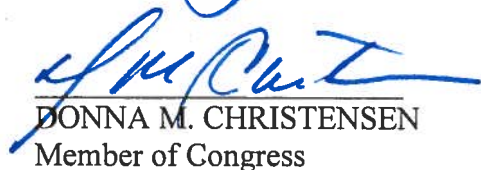
JOHN CONYERS JR.
Member of Congress



SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress



ANDRÉ CARSON
Member of Congress



DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN
Member of Congress



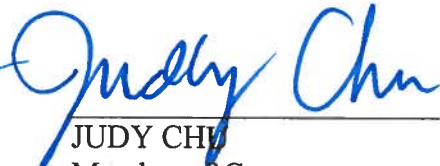
STEVEN R. ROTHMAN
Member of Congress



JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress



NITA M. LOWEY
Member of Congress



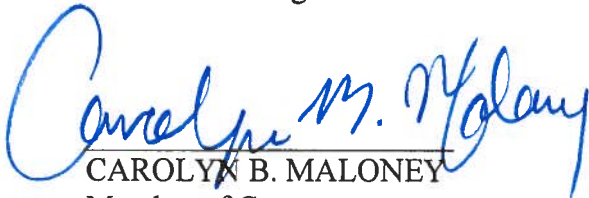
JUDY CHU
Member of Congress



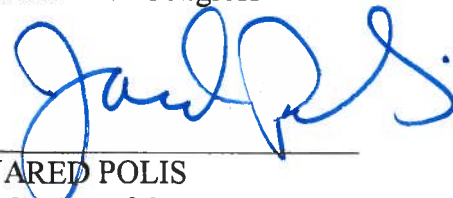
RUSH D. HOLT
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JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress



JARED POLIS
Member of Congress



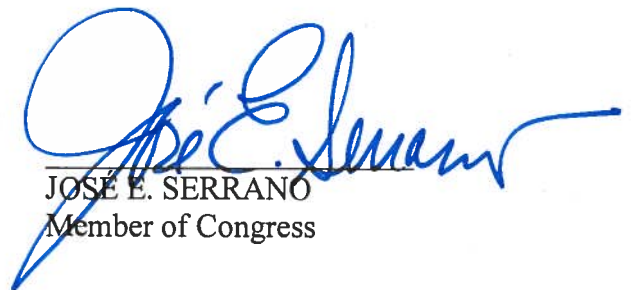
GREGORIO KILILI
CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress



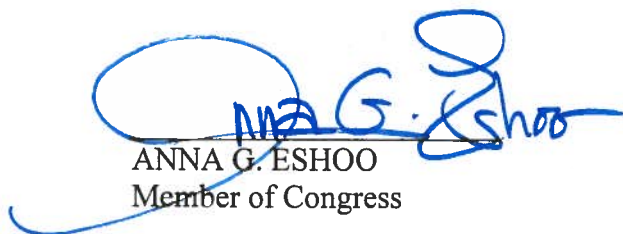
HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress



ADAM B. SCHIFF
Member of Congress



JOSE E. SERRANO
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress



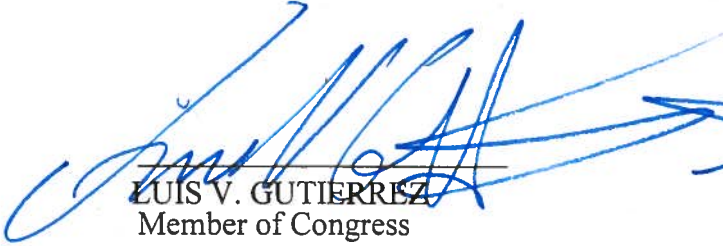
KEITH ELLISON
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ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS
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ED PASTOR
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LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
Member of Congress



SILVESTRE REYES
Member of Congress



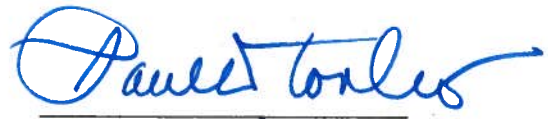
JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress



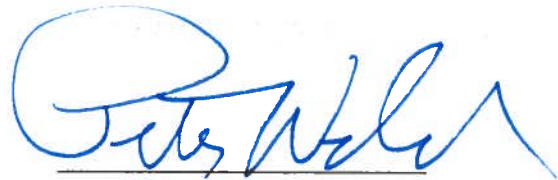
LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress



BETTY SUTTON
Member of Congress



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress



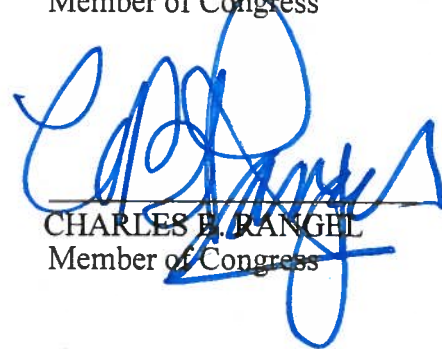
STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress



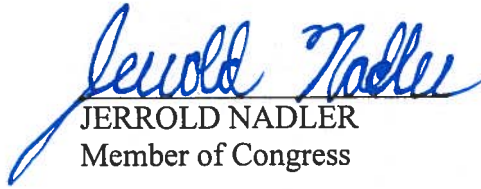
KAREN BASS
Member of Congress

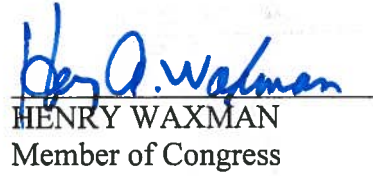


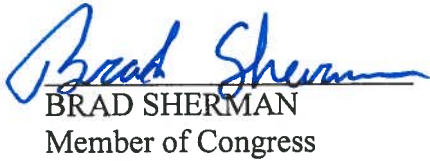
MELVIN L. WATT
Member of Congress



CHARLES E. RANGEL
Member of Congress


JERROLD NADLER
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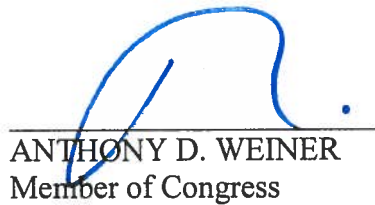

HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress

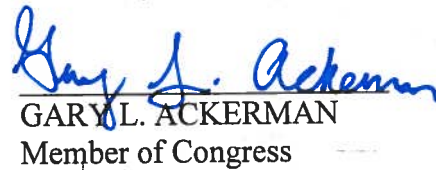

BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress


ED PERLMUTTER
Member of Congress

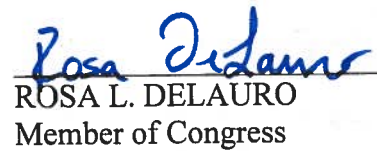

EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress


JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress


ANTHONY D. WEINER
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GARY L. ACKERMAN
Member of Congress

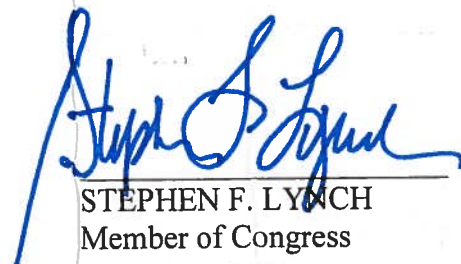

LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
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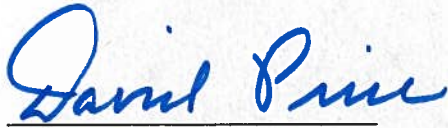

ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


MAZIE K. HIRONO
Member of Congress


WM. LACY CLAY
Member of Congress


STEPHEN F. LYNCH
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DAVID E. PRICE
Member of Congress



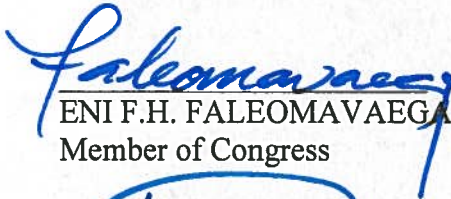
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress



GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress



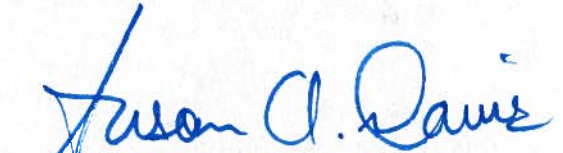
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
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LINDA T. SANCHEZ
Member of Congress



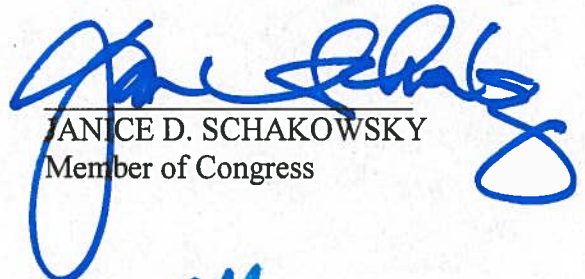
DAVID WU
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SUSAN A. DAVIS
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DIANA DeGETTE
Member of Congress



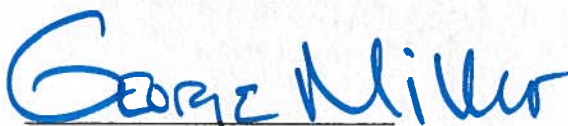
JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MORAN
Member of Congress



GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



STEVE ISRAEL
Member Congress

Michael E. Capuano

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

Member of Congress