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Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters  
PO Box 148  
Portland, ME 04412  
June 26, 2017

Secretary Zinke  
United States Department of Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As you know, the President's April 26, 2017 Executive Order 13792 initiated a review of certain National Monuments designated or expanded under the Antiquities Act of 1906, and, while Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument did not meet the size requirements for that review, it was nevertheless added under its own special review category.

The Executive Order called for a substantive review of Katahdin Woods and Waters only if you determine that there was not "adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders." The Federal Register established a public comment process "to determine whether the designation or expansion was made without adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders."

Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, (Friends) is a membership organization with a mission to preserve and protect the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality and distinctive cultural resources of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and surrounding communities for the inspiration and enjoyment of all generations. Our sixteen member Board is comprised of lifelong residents of the Katahdin Region, multi-generational Mainers, philanthropists, environmental and public lands advocates, and business owners focusing on everything from craft brewing to photography and outdoor recreation, and includes representatives from across the political spectrum.

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The membership and board members of Friends join Senators Collins and King and Congresswoman Pingree, dozens of elected officials throughout the Katahdin Region, the overwhelming majority of Maine people, business owners, and community and civic leaders in and around the Katahdin Region in opposing, in the strongest possible terms, the review of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, or any attempt to alter the designation.

The conversation about the potential of a National Park, National Park and National Recreation Area, or National Monument designation in the Katahdin Region has taken place over many years, been very public, and like the proposal itself, the feelings about the possibility changed significantly over the years *because* of those conversations.

Indeed, some of us were originally staunch opponents of the idea. However, because of the incredible number and scope of conversations between Elliotsville Plantation Inc.'s representative, Lucas St. Clair, dedicated citizens in and around the Katahdin Region, and Maine people from around the state, the proposal evolved to include protections for traditional recreational activities which are so vital to the economy, culture, and heritage of the communities in Maine's North Woods.

For example, hunting and snowmobiling were not part of the original proposal. Only through the extensive outreach to, and communication with, local residents, did EPI's proposal change to include specifically designated snowmobiling corridors, and hunting opportunities on the east side of the East Branch of the Penobscot River, both of which are now protected in perpetuity, unlike on other private lands near the monument and throughout Maine.

The public conversations surrounding the establishment of Katahdin Woods and Waters included forums, presentations, radio, and television interviews, news reports, newspaper articles, and hundreds of letters to the editors of Maine's newspapers, from the largest to the regional and local. Meetings took place with Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Groups, hunters, snowmobilers, fishermen and women, town and city councils, select boards, town managers, individual business owners, school officials, state legislators, and current and previous members of Maine's Congressional Delegation. In addition to the hundreds of meetings like those described above, there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of conversations over cups of coffee, across lunch counters, and dinner tables in the Katahdin Region and throughout Maine.

Furthermore, Maine's United States Senator Angus King invited then National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis to Maine in May of 2016. Director Jarvis hosted

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multiple meetings to hear from Mainers regarding the proposed monument. This included a massive public meeting at Maine's flagship university in Orono. In addition to Senator King, Mr. Jarvis, representatives from Maine's other congressional delegation's offices, and Governor LePage's legal counsel representing the Governor, the meeting was attended by roughly 1,400 Mainers from every part of the state. Estimates of those there in support of the monument proposal range from 1,100 to 1,250. Everyone who wished to speak had the opportunity over the course of several hours, whether they were part of the overwhelming majority there in support or the handful there in opposition.

Additionally, the National Park Service collected hundreds of comment cards at the meeting which should be part of the public record and negate the necessity of any further review. At the very least, those comments should be added to the tens of thousands of comments the Department of Interior has received regarding its current review. Director Jarvis answered every question that was asked, responding to the questioners by name. It is important to remember that, during the course of his statements, Director Jarvis, who has visited the monument lands, said the land was, "absolutely worthy," of recognition as a national monument.

Two weeks after that public meeting, Maine Congressman Bruce Poliquin invited Congressman Rob Bishop, Chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources, to East Millinocket, one of the towns bordering Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, to hold a field hearing with the stated purpose of ensuring local voices were heard and considered. Despite claims to the contrary made in the post hearing statement issued by the Committee, supporters of the proposal outnumbered opponents 4:1. Both Mr. Poliquin and Mr. Bishop are aware of this, and the ratio of supporters to opponents, as well as the entire public hearing, should also be a matter of public record as the overwhelming support was captured on video now in the possession of the Committee.

Any attempt to suggest there was not adequate public outreach prior to the designation is misguided in nature and effort. Assertions that the majority of Maine people oppose the monument are utterly false, as has been demonstrated by multiple polls over several years, all of which have shown strong majority support from every demographic, including age, political affiliation, gender, and geographic region within the state. Indeed, more than two thirds of Maine's second congressional district, within which the monument exists, has consistently supported the monument designation. The fact that the monument proposal was supported by the vast majority of Mainers from around the state was also verified by the submission of hundreds of letters to the editor over the course of several years.

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Since the designation of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, support, particularly in the communities adjacent to the monument, has grown and solidified.

This is due in part to the remarkably quick evidence of economic benefits expressly attributable to the monument. All national designations like this eventually lead to economic benefits but, in the Katahdin region, these benefits have begun to manifest in only the few months since the designation. Formerly stagnant real estate is selling and home prices are increasing. Local businesses are investing, sprucing up their storefronts, remodeling interiors, and expanding their offerings to help national monument visitors enjoy Maine's North Woods. Young parents, themselves children of the Katahdin region who were forced to migrate when the mills closed, are returning to the region with their families to take over or help expand multi-generational businesses.

Furthermore, it is because of the monument that the important history and heritage of this part of Maine is being brought into the light for the world to see and learn. That history includes stories of the lumbermen whose work literally helped build some of the world's great cities. It includes the incredible history and culture of the Wabanaki People who have always been so connected to this land, its mountains, and rivers. The stories of this place include that of Don Fendler ("*Lost on a Mountain in Maine*") who, as a boy, became lost atop Mt. Katahdin and wandered for days only to be discovered and saved on the very land now recognized as Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. And the history of this land, and the communities surrounding it, is intricately tied to some of the most important people in our nation's history.

Henry David Thoreau, who visited the North Woods three times, recorded the details of his trips as he paddled down the East Branch of the Penobscot, camping at sites still in existence on the monument lands. His diary entries would eventually become, "*The Maine Woods*," in which Maine's North Woods inspired him to write,

“The kings of England formerly had their forests ‘to hold the king's game,’ for sport or food, sometimes destroying villages to create or extend them; and I think that they were impelled by a true instinct. Why should not we, who have renounced the king's authority, have our national preserves, where no villages need be destroyed, in which the bear and panther, and some even of the hunter race, may still exist, and not be ‘civilized off the face of the earth,’ — our forests, not to hold the king's game merely, but to hold and preserve the king himself also, the lord of creation, — not

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for idle sport or food, but for inspiration and our own true recreation?”

The history of the Katahdin Region, particularly the land and rivers of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, are also intricately tied to the history of conservation throughout the United States. Theodore Roosevelt, known for his conservation ethic, was the first President to use the Antiquities Act. He first developed his love of the outdoors, wilderness, hunting, hiking and the rugged people of northern Maine, on the very land now designated as Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Teddy Roosevelt famously lost his boot in Wassatquoik Stream but refused to be turned back from summiting Katahdin, which he did in moccasins, the equivalent of hiking a mountain in slippers. Roosevelt, who later hired his two Maine guides, Katahdin region natives Bill Sewell and Wilmot Dow, to run his Dakota ranch, developed his love of wilderness on the monument land. His love of the beauty of this place was expressed in many letters home while visiting lumber camps in the Katahdin Region.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the atmosphere in the communities of the Katahdin region has completely changed since the designation. For more than a hundred years, towns in the Katahdin region were dependent upon, and thrived because of, the paper mills. In the past few decades, those mills have disappeared and the communities have been left devastated. As the economies associated with the timber industry have evaporated, many of those who were born and raised in the Katahdin region, people whose grandparents carved these communities out of the Great North Woods, have had to move away. As a result of that exodus, tax bases dwindled, businesses closed, houses were abandoned or foreclosed, and essential services like schools, roads, and public safety have suffered. People throughout the Katahdin region have at times been bitterly divided, even within families, about what should happen next, or whether there was any hope for a return to prosperity.

The establishment of the monument has rejuvenated the communities. The majority of former opponents, a group that was itself in the minority, have embraced the monument as they have seen the immediate economic and recreational benefits it has created and protected, while recognizing that monument related threats to the forest products industry or deterrents to industrial investment, have not materialized. Local communities have begun to coalesce and unite around the potential offered by this designation. Hope for a brighter future has spread through the region.

This review is dampening the momentum created by the National Monument, and any attempt to reverse the designation or any of the land protections provided by the

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designation, is damaging the Katahdin region, Maine, and our nation as a whole; a nation which prides itself on its national treasures conserved forever as national parks and national monuments.

The Board of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters was pleased to hear that you, Secretary Zinke, visited the region and agreed with the sentiments of Teddy Roosevelt, that this is a place of great beauty and that it should be protected. We also agree with the vast majority of Maine people in our support of the monument designation and the protections it provides, and our opposition to this review or any attempt to change the protections provided by the designation of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and the benefits it is and will continue to bring to Maine.

Sincerely,

Board of Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters



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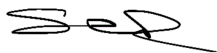
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