

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2003

The Honorable Charles H. Taylor, Chairman
The Honorable Norman D. Dicks, Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

As you meet in conference with the Senate regarding the Interior appropriations bill for fiscal year 2004, we urge you to insist on retaining section 337 of the House bill.

That provision would bar implementation of a recent Department of the Interior regulation establishing procedures for issuing "recordable disclaimers of interest" ("disclaimer rule") with regard to any lands within a designated National Monument, Wilderness Study Area, National Park System unit, National Wildlife Refuge System unit, or lands within the National Wilderness Preservation System. As you know, it was added to the House bill by a voice vote on the House floor, after the House substituted this approach for language that would have gone further and barred any implementation of the disclaimer rule.

The disclaimer rule could have widespread negative consequences, and while Section 337 of the House bill did not address and would not protect all lands that could be affected, it would protect some of the most sensitive parts of America's public lands. Accordingly, we urge that at a minimum the House language be retained in the conference report.

Sincerely,

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Vernon Ehlers

Henry A. Waxman

Nick Rahall

Sherry B. Roberts

Sam Algee

Yee Yee

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