

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

S. 799 & HR 1925

What are the chances of passing America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in the 111th Congress?

The American's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2009 will designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah. This bill, if enacted, would designate 9.4 million acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Utah as Wilderness.

According to a Congressional Research Service report, 5.7 million BLM acres is nearly 3 times the BLM wilderness recommendations and 75% more than the BLM's Wilderness study acreage. The 5.7 million acres amounted to 26% of all BLM lands in Utah, and 11% of the entire state.

October 1, 2009, the massive Utah Wilderness bill, known as the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2009, HR 1925, will be heard in the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee.

The core of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act remains the same. It still proposes to designate wilderness for BLM public lands in Utah. The areas considered for closure are:

- o Great Basin Areas ~ 2,240,827 acres**
- o Zion/Mojave Desert Areas ~ 160,000 acres**
- o Grand Staircase-Escalante Areas ~ 1,771,717**
- o Moab-LaSal Canyons Areas ~ 256,815 acres**
- o Henry Mountains Areas ~ 444,204 acres**
- o Glen Canyon Areas ~ 906,446 acres**
- o San Juan-Anasazi Areas ~ 520,606 acres**
- o Canyonlands Basin Areas ~ 689,884 acres**
- o San Rafael Swell Areas ~ 1,098,773 acres**
- o Book Cliffs/Uinta Basin Areas ~ 1,015,821 acres**

There is no question that our access to Rockhounding sites would be severely curtailed, if not totally destroyed, by these bills. Sec. 209 withdraws entry and disposition of minerals, so we can't pick up anything anyway.

In Sec. 204, the Dept of the Interior will grab all the water rights in the wilderness areas, regardless of existing downstream prior rights. This is a crucial issue in a desert state with ranching, farming, industry and homesteads dependent on seasonal water.

With the expanded Democratic majority in Congress, the chances are the best they've been in over a decade. Returning and new pro-wilderness Members of Congress are in position to move legislation that closes Utah's public lands. At the very least for the 111th Congress, the Utah wilderness champions have been discussing the possibility of Congressional hearings on this legislation in their Levant committees, and more Congressional support makes that important first step to a bill's movement even more likely.

Cosponsors (See below) are important if Utah wilderness faces attack in Congress and with your help we can foster that attack. Should legislation be introduced that proposed [a different](#) Utah wilderness or would otherwise threaten these lands, America's Red Rock Wilderness Act stands as the benchmark for Utah public lands closure legislation that other proposals must help to cancel.

Cosponsors (See below) reaffirms the national importance of America's Red Rock Wilderness, [they are](#) providing support for actions by the Obama administration to develop stronger management policy: By gaining support from Members of Congress from throughout the country, they demonstrate that closing public lands in wild Utah is indeed a national issue that is getting national attention. If we do not take action soon the supporters will work to urge the Obama administration's Interior Department to change the policies, regulations, and guidelines that prevented our public lands from closing under President Bush. We need to proactively pursue a unified effort that keeps Public Lands open for all public use. This is an important compliment to our legislative goals.

Senator Bennett is a new Member of the Public Lands Subcommittee in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and a contact website is listed below.

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/person.xpd?id=300007>

We need you to write to Senator Bennett asking him not to support S 799 and that we are in support of his effort in keeping Utah's Public Lands open to all Public Users and not the Special Interest Groups who want to close 9 million Acres for their own usage.

Utah's political representatives need to know that the majority of Utahans and concerned people from all across the United States oppose this bill, and they need to hear it from you. Today please.

Rep. Rob Bishop: 202-225-0453

Rep. Jim Matheson: 202-225-3011

Rep. Jason Chaffetz: 202-225-7751

Be polite. None of Utah's Representatives or Senators supports this madness. If you call now, you can make this bill look like **toxic waste**, so that none of Utah's representatives will ever come near it. Ever. Contact your own state's House Representative and asks them NOT to support S 799, the American's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2009

The Senate is much more willing than the House to abide by the wishes of home state representatives, so Bennett's new appointment may have a negative impact in Durbin's ability to hold a hearing on the Red Rock bill this Congress. This can work in our favor and give us some time to act.

These are the sponsors of the bill at this time; writing to them is not advised as they are going to be pushing this legislation through the senate. Feel free to contact any of the 80 senators not listed and offer your comments and opinions.

Senate Sponsor [Richard Durbin \[D-IL\]](#)

House Sponsor [Rep. Maurice Hinchey \[D-NY22\]](#)

Senate Co Sponsors House Co Sponsors (132), too many to list here.

[Barbara Boxer \[D-CA\]](#)

[Roland Burris \[D-IL\]](#)

[Maria Cantwell \[D-WA\]](#)

[Benjamin Cardin \[D-MD\]](#)

[Russell Feingold \[D-WI\]](#)

[Kirsten Gillibrand \[D-NY\]](#)

[Thomas Harkin \[D-IA\]](#)

[Edward Kaufman \[D-DE\]](#)

[John Kerry \[D-MA\]](#)

[Frank Lautenberg \[D-NJ\]](#)

[Patrick Leahy \[D-VT\]](#)

[Joseph Lieberman \[I-CT\]](#)

[Robert Menéndez \[D-NJ\]](#)

[Jeff Merkley \[D-OR\]](#)

[John Reed \[D-RI\]](#)

[Bernard Sanders \[I-VT\]](#)

[Charles Schumer \[D-NY\]](#)

[Debbie Ann Stabenow \[D-MI\]](#)

[Mark Udall \[D-CO\]](#)

[Sheldon Whitehouse \[D-RI\]](#)

Attached are the current bills that are going through their committees at this time. It is provided for your reading and to help formulate an informed response to be sent to your elected officials.