



December 4, 2018

Senator Orrin Hatch
United States Senate

Congressman John Curtis
United States House of Representatives

Senator Hatch and Congressman Curtis:

We are writing to express the Utah Wilderness Coalition's (UWC) opposition to the Emery County Public Land Management Act of 2018, S. 2809/H.R. 5727.

The UWC is a coalition of over 100 conservation organizations committed to protecting wilderness-quality lands in Utah as wilderness. The UWC's executive committee consists of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Sierra Club. For the past 30 years, the UWC has promoted protecting and defending Utah's remarkable redrock wilderness, including nearly 1.5 million acres of public land in Emery County that is proposed for wilderness designation in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, S. 948/H.R. 2044. The UWC maintains an ongoing inventory of these lands, regularly conducts on-the-ground monitoring, and holds land managers accountable for decisions that would impair the wilderness suitability of these areas. The UWC has, and continues to provide indispensable expertise on all issues pertaining to wilderness-quality public lands within Emery County.

We oppose the Emery County Public Land Management Act of 2018, as the bill:

- **Fails to protect the remarkable and critical wilderness landscapes of Labyrinth Canyon, Muddy Creek, and the San Rafael Badlands.**
- **Rolls back existing Wilderness Study Area (WSA) protections to facilitate coal mining.**
- **Authorizes a land exchange that allows State acquisition of proposed wilderness and agency-identified lands with wilderness characteristics.**
- **Includes unprecedented giveaways to the State of Utah in the form of recreation and public purpose conveyances.**
- **Allows the State of Utah to continue its federal court litigation seeking highway rights-of-way through designated wilderness, instead of resolving Revised Statute (R.S.) 2477 issues.**

Only by fixing the issues outlined above do we believe that the Emery County bill would become worthy of these remarkable public lands and acceptable for passage into law.

Sincerely,

Neal Clark
Wildlands Program Director
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Sharon Buccino
Senior Director, Lands Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

Athan Manuel
Director, Lands Protection Program
Sierra Club