

December 6th, 2018

**An open letter to Governor Gary Herbert
and Utah's Congressional delegation**

On behalf of our futures as parents, educators, scientists, doctors, politicians, lawyers, land stewards, and providers for the world, we write to protect the redrock wilderness in Emery County and throughout Southern Utah. The Emery County Public Lands Management Act as it stands does not do justice to the San Rafael Swell or Labyrinth Canyon. It sets a bad precedent for how we can collectively steward the wild lands of Southern Utah. Some of us were born here in Utah while others came for work, school, or recreation. All of us stayed for the unparalleled access to wild places and the healing they provide. We urge you to protect these wild places in Emery County and beyond for the benefit of all current and future generations of those who may seek solace in these lands.

As is, the Emery County Public Lands Management Act does not protect over two thirds of the 1.4 million acres of wilderness-qualifying lands in the region. It ignores land that is vulnerable to damage from extraction or motorized vehicle use. This, coupled with the downgrade of a National Conservation Area to a National Recreation Area, effectively prioritizes motorized recreation over ecosystem conservation. This lack of vision will cause irreparable wildlife damage in the area, affecting everything from the delicate cryptobiotic soil to the golden eagle. Further, the bill only protects lands within Emery County, leaving the ecological system surrounding the Green River protected on one side of the river, but susceptible to harm on the other. This is scientifically inadequate and morally unacceptable.

Many of our studies involve climate change mitigation. We are coming of age in a time where we are affected daily by anthropogenic climate change. We recognize that low income communities and communities of color all over the globe experience these impacts first--and have been for a long time. Children growing up in the Salt Lake Valley know the year-round air pollution as normal. It is irresponsible to support the continued extraction of fossil fuels on U.S. public land with the futures of Utah's most vulnerable communities, our own health and careers, and future generations at stake. The natural landscapes of Utah's public lands have deeper and longer lasting value than any amount of money natural gas, uranium, coal, and oil can create. By encouraging a new coal mine and operation in the Book Cliffs, the bill is ignorant to current climate reality and would most likely exacerbate the problem. People all over the country come to wild lands in Utah to escape the effects of development and climate change. Us humans cannot manufacture a new landscape, but we can slow or stop the backslide.

The iron-rich redrock of Utah runs in its citizens' blood. Indigenous Tribes of the Southwest have been using the area for thousands of years. Hispanic and Latinx community members can trace Indigenous and Spanish roots to the Colorado Plateau as well. These landscapes are an immovable piece of many Utahns' identities as well as public land enthusiasts all over the

planet. We encourage you to protect this land that many people consider “home” to the highest degree you can because it has a profound place in our sense of self.

Wilderness has irreplaceable and unquantifiable value to human life. For womxn, wilderness provides a spiritual and cultural service. Wilderness is a place to heal. Wilderness is important to us as young womxn because it provides a safe place for our wellbeing. Many of us feel safer in the wilderness than in the city because it is a place free from the everyday social transgressions that womxn, especially queer womxn and womxn of color, face. In solitude, we can discern the boundary at which our bodies end and society begins. We go to escape sexual harassment. We go to feel empowered in our bodies. It lets us focus on what we are capable of rather than what traps us. The openness of Utah’s redrock wilderness provides the peace and quiet we often lack in our minds and our surroundings. The stars are not obscured by a glass ceiling. Looking into seas of sandstone and sagebrush makes us feel small and our problems less significant. In this ever-growing and ever-changing world, it is of utmost importance to us to protect as much of these wild lands as we possibly can, for all present and future generations.

We the undersigned young womxn and allies demand that you oppose any action that undermines our remaining wild places. Stand on the right side of history and exercise the responsibility to your constituents and the American public by preserving Utah’s wild public lands as wilderness. This generation and all future generations deserve to experience them as they exist now. This bill does not do justice to Utah’s citizens nor its history. We will only support actions taken to protect more of Utah’s redrock wilderness.

Sincerely,

Josee Stetich - Westminster College Environmental Science Major, Honors College

Sabrina Lowder - Westminster College Communication and Cultural Studies Major, Honors College, Writer

Logan Hastings - University of Utah Enviro Club Outreach Coordinator

Anna Wilder - Brigham Young University Graphic Design Major

Isabel Giarratana - Westminster College Nursing Major

Lily Bosworth - University of Utah Geological Engineering/Environmental Geoscience Major, Resident Advisor for First Year Honors Research in the Sciences, Student Coordinator of HUESS

Lucy Allen - University of Utah Co-coordinator of HUESS, Steering Committee Member of Real Food Utah, Student Representative for Multi-Disciplinary Design Program in U of U College of Architecture + Planning

Leah Joyner - University of Utah PhD Student in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, Sustainability Committee Co-Chair

Tracy Hurd Killpack - Utah Valley University Alum, Artist/Developmentalist

Deborah Tysor, MS, TRS, CTRS - University of Utah Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

Boyana Martinova - University of Utah Applied Mathematics Major

Siglinde Ferguson - University of Utah Resident Director

Ocean Tennant-McCubbin - University of Utah Chemical Engineering Major

Noelle Reimers - *Student*
Sarah Stock - *Living Rivers Program Director and Community Organizer*
Jessica Morgan - *Westminster College Finance and Marketing Major*
Stephanie D. Hamborsky - *Community Engagement & Marketing Coordinator for Moonflower Community Co-Op*
Leslie Cepeda - *University of Utah Graduate Student*
Alizabeth Potucek - *Grand County Resident*
Cali Bulmash - *Canyon Country Rising Tide Organizer*
Jessie Dickerson - *University of Utah Masters Student in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism*
Cinimin Kofford - *Utah Valley University Honors Recreation Management Alum, UVU's Nature to the Classroom Director, Adjunct Instructor*
Ilikea Arakaki - *Administrator at Nature to the Classroom Non-Profit Organization at UVU*
Nicole Swena - *Salt Lake Community College, Massage Therapist*
Cheyenne Kopelson - *Snow College Outdoor Leadership Major*
Megan List - *Canyon Country Rising Tide Organizer*
Brooke Larsen - *Uplift Organizer*
Scott Williams - *Utah Valley University Associate Professor*
Josephine Kovash - *Resiliency Hub Board Member*
Brandy Bowmaster - *Canyon Country Rising Tide Organizer, Small Business Owner in Grand County*
Michelle Wentling - *University of Utah Environmental Humanities Graduate, Torrey House Press Graduate Fellow*
Ember Bradbury - *Westminster College Feminist Club President*
Kate Tsourmas - *Westminster College Neuroscience and Honors College Alum, University of Utah Laboratory Technician at the Olivera Lab*
Noor Hamouda - *Westminster College International Business Major*
Molly Karasick - *Westminster College Communications Alum*
Scout Invie - *Westminster College English Major, Honors College*
Rachel Davis - *Torrey House Press Production and Community Relations Manager*
Renee Martinez - *Westminster College Environmental Studies Major*
Kara Kornhauser - *Westminster College Environmental Science Major, Honors College, Student Researcher, Great Salt Lake Institute*
Emily Calhoun - *Westminster College Neuroscience Major*
Annette Donald - *Westminster College Assistant Director at the Writing Center, Feminist Club Co-President, Honors College*
Sarah Turner - *Westminster College Education Major, Honors College*
Madeleine Humel - *Westminster College Environmental Civics Major*
Annie Vreeke - *Westminster College Public Health Alum*
Zoe Zeerip - *Westminster College Environmental Science Alum, Sustainability Coordinator*
Maya Rockwell - *Westminster College Associated Students of Westminster Senator*
Kelsey Laramie - *Westminster College Psychology and Sociology Major, Presidential Ambassador, Resident Advisor*
Stephanie Russell - *Westminster College Nursing Major, Public Health Minor*
Sarah Rohde - *Westminster College Environmental Studies Alum*
Maggie Regier - *Westminster College Student Body Vice President*
Piper Christian - *University of Utah Student*
Naomi Shapiro - *Westminster College Public Health Major, Honors College, Institute for Mountain Research Fellow*

Rosanise O'Dell - *Westminster College Environmental Science Alum*
Kodi Frost - *Utah Valley University Behavioral Science Alum, Cotopaxi Retail Guide*
Mishka Banuri - *West High School Student, Co-Founder of Utah Youth Environmental Solutions and Organizer*
Elizabeth Dark - *Rowland Hall Student*
Olivia Fuhrman - *Rowland Hall Student*
John Trout - *Utahn*
Susan Stetich - *Chairman of Visual Art Institute, Mother, Utahn*
Gabrielle Barker - *Westminster College Communication Major*
Jeanne Purser - *Concerned Citizen*
Nick Wallace - *University of Utah Alum, Utahn*
Susie Funk - *University of Utah Alum, Senior Manager, Advanced MD*
Ian Wood - *Westminster College Student*
Emily G. Smith - *Former English Professor at University of Utah, Descendent of Utah Pioneers*
Jacqueline Pollard - *Westminster College Biology Major*
Gabrielle Regenhardt - *University of Utah Engineering Major*
Isabelle Ballard - *Junior PM*
Jennifer Harvey - *University of Utah Pediatric ICU Nurse Practitioner*
Shivani Lindmeir - *University of Utah English Teaching Major*
Alexis Epling - *University of Utah Elementary Education Major*
Ella Baker-Smith - *Rowland Hall Student, Utah Youth Environmental Solutions*
Blanca Yagüe - *University of Utah Anthropology PhD Student*
Eliza Van Dyk - *Westminster College Student and Organizer*
Olivia Juarez - *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance Latinx Community Organizer*
Audrey Lidgard - *Utah State University Student, SOSNR*
Nick Benoit - *Utah State University Student, SOSNR*
Bryce Johnston - *Utah State University Student, SOSNR*
Paul Consalvo - *Utah State University Student, SOSNR*
Ashley Simon - *Self Employed at Acorn*

C.C. Senator Orrin Hatch
Senator Mike Lee
Representative Rob Bishop
Representative Mia Love
Representative John Curtis
Representative Chris Stewart