



United States Senate

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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

I write today to ask your Department to make appropriate accommodation for continued rockhounding and other rock collecting by hobbyists in any interim and final management plans for Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and Castle Mountains National Monuments. The Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service have long recognized rockhounding as a legitimate recreational pursuit. I deeply appreciate your work in support of the President's proclamations, and I trust that the management planning process will thoroughly examine this issue.

The California desert is a geological wonder: Jagged mountain backdrops jutting up from the expansive alluvial fans, bajadas, and stunning playas that dot the landscape, all of which reveal a pre-historic landscape as old as 2.7 billion years. And this landscape is filled with agate, jasper, opal, chalcedony and quartz crystals. The recreational collection of these items by rockhounds and other enthusiasts not only enriches the public's ability to enjoy and explore the desert, but also serves as a valuable educational tool.

Having heard from the highly dedicated and enthusiastic rockhounding community on this issue, I worked to accommodate their interests in the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act (S. 414)—the impetus for the President's recent designation of the three aforementioned national monuments. That bill made clear that the Secretary shall continue to authorize rockhounding (*see* Sec. 101).

It is my understanding that the President's proclamations do not prohibit the type of recreational collecting that rockhounds have long enjoyed in this area. Because of

the recent confusion surrounding the authorized uses within these new national monuments, I ask that you confirm the following points in writing:

- Does the President's recent proclamations designating the Mojave Trails National Monument prohibit rockhounding?
- Prior to issuance of the BLM's final management plan for the Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow National Monuments, will the BLM's interim guidance provide for continued rockhounding?

I am confident that the BLM, Forest Service, and National Park Service will continue to support public access and recreation in their management of these national monuments. And I hope that your Department will consider the benefits of allowing continued rockhounding and hobbyist collecting, where suitable.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

CC: Director Neil Kornze, Bureau of Land Management
Chief Thomas L. Tidwell, U.S. Forest Service
Director Jon Jarvis, National Park Service

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