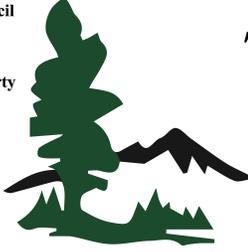


Executive Council
Brenda Barrett
Maria Burks
Mark Butler
Maureen Finnerty
Phil Francis
David Graber
Don Hellmann
Doug Morris
Mike Murray
Dick Ring
Sheridan Steele
Kate Stevenson
Pat Tiller



The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks

Voices of Experience

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION – NO HARD COPY TO FOLLOW

Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Bishop,

The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks opposes the parts of H.R. 763 and S. 257, bills recently introduced by Representative Bruce Poliquin and Senator Angus King, respectively, which would open the intertidal lands in Acadia National Park to the commercial harvest of clams and worms.

The Coalition is comprised of over 1,200 members who collectively have more than 30,000 years of experience managing and protecting national parks. We believe that our parks and public lands represent the very best of America, and advocate for their protection.

National parks are among the last places that natural resources, many that have been over-harvested and depleted elsewhere, are preserved for future generations. Unfortunately, a variety of interests across the country are urging similar legislation that would compromise a basic purpose of parks, the legislation that created them, and the policies that guide their stewardship, for commercial gain.

Such a purpose seems to be part of H.R. 763 and S. 257. Of course, the term "traditional use" rings a sympathetic bell for all of us. But we should ask: In what condition are the rest of the clam flats in Maine? Does long-term failure to assure sustainable harvest of clams and worms elsewhere warrant opening of one of the last fully protected places for commercial exploitation? We believe that the romantic past of "traditional use" is no longer viable in clam flats that in so many places have been overharvested, eaten by invasive species, and almost certainly affected by a wide range of threats that were not present in the days when "traditional use" seemed to work. For example, we know that the European green crab, an invasive species, is causing significant impacts on Maine's clam flats, especially along the shores of southern Maine. Green crabs prey on smaller and medium-sized softshell clams. With commercial fisherman taking the medium and larger clams, and green crabs the smaller ones, it is now much more likely that clam

flats cannot withstand the ever-increasing impacts of "traditional use" in an age of global warming and other non-traditional threats.

Our National Parks are among the last places on the planet that have a chance of weathering the storms of invasive species and climate change. They serve as blueprints for restoring damaged ecosystems, not as the last places for resource exploitation. They are also among America's best laboratories, places where research contributes to a science-based foundation for determining the best ways to protect resources inside - and outside - park boundaries. Given its long history of public support and collaboration, Acadia National Park has long been recognized as a place where a science-based foundation for resources stewardship is defined.

Finally, we know that our national parks serve as economic engines that draw large numbers of visitors seeking the authentic, wild, and intact nature of their resources. It is estimated that Acadia National Park generated a total of \$304.6 million in 2015 with more than 2 million recreational visits each year. This park and all parks will remain special only to the extent that they are fully protected from compromise and harm.

Again, the Coalition opposes legislation that would lead to harvest of natural resources that compromises the unique and significant values of our national parks, including the threat of commercial exploitation of clams in Acadia National Park. We urge you to advocate for the best possible preservation of the special values of Acadia National Park.

Sincerely,



Maureen Finnerty, Chair
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Email: maureen_finnerty@protectnps.org
Mail: P.O. Box 48092, Washington, DC 20002
Web: www.protectnps.org

cc: Congressman Raúl Grijalva , D-AZ
Congressman Tom McClintock, R-CA
Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, D-HI
Senator Angus King, I-ME
Senator Susan Collins, R-ME
Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, D-ME
Congressman Bruce Poliquin, R-ME
Theresa Pierno, President, National Parks and Conservation Association
Michael Reynolds, Director (Acting), National Park Service
Kevin Schneider, Superintendent, Acadia National Park
David MacDonald, President & CEO, Friends of Acadia
Sean Mahoney, Executive Vice President, Conservation Law Foundation