



December 8, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As leaders of Assemblies of God's Southern Pacific District, we embrace our moral obligation to protect God's creation and recognize the need to further protect the California desert, which is why we urge you to use your authority under the Antiquities Act to preserve the California desert and designate three new national monuments – Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains.

Palms 24:1-2

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to Him. For He laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths."

These places provide grand opportunities for individuals to connect with their spirituality, family and culture. Many of us have led trips and outings with families, youth and community leaders into the California desert – from trips to Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave National Preserve to San Jacinto Mountains, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and most recently Amboy Crater. The California desert is a way of life for many of us, but it needs your help.

The desert is facing many threats — proposals to export groundwater from desert aquifers, air pollution, rapid community development and encroachments from renewable energy developments — that risk the future of this region and could have irreversible consequences. As pastors from the California desert, we appreciate not only the natural beauty that surrounds our communities, but we also acknowledge the need to care and protect these areas for future generations.

Each of the proposed national monuments will greatly benefit the region: Mojave Trails provides vital habitat for a variety of wildlife. It is also steeped in historical significance as it includes irreplaceable archeological and cultural sites. Sand to Snow features one of the most diverse habitats in the country, which includes stunning cultural sites and rare species. Castle Mountain features stunning vistas of California and Nevada desert Mountain ranges.

Our clean water, wildlife habitat, cultural treasures and public lands are entrusted to us to be protected and preserved for the next generation. Our land, water, and wildlife are gifts from God, and it is our moral responsibility to care for these gifts. We should respect and live in harmony with all of God's creation. Please help us protect the California desert and fulfill our nation's moral responsibility in protecting God's creation.



Sincerely,

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CC: Honorable Senator Diane Feinstein
Honorable Interior Secretary Sally Jewell
Honorable US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack
Christina Goldfuss, Acting Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality