



April 15, 2026

**Subject: Please Vote NO on S.J.Res.109 / H.J.Res.151, Important to Small Businesses in CA-23**

Dear Representative Jay Obernolte,

On behalf of the Morongo Basin Conservation Association (MBCA), representing communities across the Morongo Basin and High Desert, we respectfully urge you to vote NO on S.J.Res.109 / H.J.Res.151, the Congressional Review Act resolution that would overturn the management plan for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

In our district, public lands are not an abstract issue. They are a core part of the local economy. In and around Joshua Tree National Park, as well as Sand to Snow National Monument and Mojave Trails National Monument, small businesses rely on stable and predictable land management to operate, invest, and grow.

From Big Bear to the Morongo Basin, our region's economy is closely tied to the long-term stewardship of public lands, supporting tourism, outdoor recreation, and the network of small businesses that serve both residents and visitors.

For many in the Morongo Basin, including hospitality operators, contractors, guides, and retailers, these landscapes function as essential infrastructure. When management frameworks are consistent, businesses can plan ahead with confidence. When they are subject to sudden reversal, that confidence is weakened, and investment slows.

Even modest shifts in visitation or perception can have outsized effects in rural desert economies, where small businesses operate on tight margins and depend on steady, year-round activity.

Although this resolution applies to a monument in Utah, it establishes a precedent that could affect how public lands are managed here in California. The concern is not about one specific plan, but about whether long-term, locally informed decisions can be undone quickly, without the same level of input and deliberation that created them.

Resource Management Plans are developed over many years with input from local communities, Tribes, recreation groups, and stakeholders across sectors. They are designed to reflect real conditions on the ground while balancing access, use, and conservation. Overturning such a plan through the Congressional Review Act bypasses that process and removes the predictability that communities and businesses depend on.



For a district like ours, where tourism and small business activity are closely tied to public lands, this kind of policy uncertainty has direct economic consequences. It can delay investment, affect hiring decisions, and create hesitation among business owners who depend on a stable operating environment.

We share your interest in responsible land management that supports both economic opportunity and long-term stewardship. However, using the Congressional Review Act to reverse established management plans introduces unnecessary instability and reduces the role of local input in shaping outcomes.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that you vote NO on S.J.Res.109 / H.J.Res.151 and support a stable, locally informed approach to public land management.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our district.

Sincerely,

Steve Bardwell, President (Pioneertown)  
Erin Gatlin, Vice President (Yucca Valley)

On behalf of the Board of Directors:

Laraine Turk (Joshua Tree)  
Bob Wold (Joshua Tree)  
Stacy Doolittle (Joshua Tree)  
David Fick (Joshua Tree)  
Brian Hammer (Lucerne Valley)  
Janet Johnston (Joshua Tree)  
Sarah Kennington (Pioneertown)  
Pat Flanagan (Twentynine Palms)  
Arch McCulloch (Morongo Valley)  
Joani Tremblay (Pioneertown)

Morongo Basin Conservation Association — Protecting Our Deserts for 57 Years