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Office of Governor Paul LePage

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NRCM is ignoring the will of rural Mainers

The Natural Resources Council of Maine is at it again. First, they denied high-paying mining jobs to rural Mainers. Then they tried to raise electricity costs by giving above-market-rate contracts to the solar industry. Now they are ignoring the will of Mainers by asking President Obama to unilaterally create a national park in the Katahdin region.

Hello, this is Governor Paul LePage.

The Natural Resources Council of Maine knows the people of rural Maine do not want a national park on Roxanne Quimby’s land in the Katahdin region. Town after town has voted against it. The Legislature approved a bill I proposed to block creation of the national monument.

So NRCM is trying to end run around the Maine people and pressuring President Obama to declare the land as a “national monument.” It’s the first step in creating a national park.

Senator Angus King, who champions all liberal causes at the expense of working Mainers, invited the director of the National Park Service to hold a public meeting to discuss creating the national monument.

Working closely with King, the NRCM coordinated attendance at the meeting and arranged to bus supporters from Southern Maine to the meeting in Orono.

Not surprisingly, King did not invite—or even notify—the Governor’s Office. It’s pretty clear they have made up their mind, and they don’t want to have an open dialogue.

The push to create this national monument is being spearheaded by liberal environmentalists, like Roxanne Quimby and her son Lucas St. Clair; Angus King and Quimby’s spokesman David Farmer; and summer visitors who are not concerned about poverty in rural Maine.

Liberals from Portland and wealthy coastal towns also favor the national monument. Most of these people have never visited the North Woods, and they don’t care what rural Mainers want.

The Quimby family is now using highly paid lobbyists in Washington, D.C. to lobby President Obama to use his authority to designate this area a national monument. They ignore the fact that the National Park Service already has a $12 billion backlog in maintenance work at national parks.

Wildfires in western states on federal land owned by the National Park Service are the result of poor management of the forest. We cannot risk that kind of disaster in Maine.
Let’s be honest, folks. The creation of this national park is nothing more than an ego play for Roxanne Quimby and Senator King. It’s not about good jobs for rural Mainers—it’s about headlines for Angus King.

Heaven forbid he would help Northern Mainers get good jobs. If it was about creating good jobs, the Natural Resource Council of Maine would not be involved. The liberal elitists at NRCM say “no” to every opportunity to create jobs for rural Mainers. They are determined to preserve a pristine environment with no human activity, even if it keeps people in poverty.

We can have a balance between protecting the environment and creating good jobs. A national park is not the way to do it.

If Quimby wants a legacy, she can donate her land to the State of Maine. It would be well-managed, Mainers could still use it for traditional activity and it would be a good complement to Baxter State Park.

Rural Mainers need to speak up: tell President Obama to stay out of it; tell Angus King to go back to Washington; and tell NRCM to stop obstructing good jobs for Mainers.