November 16, 2016

Dear President Obama and Secretary Jewell:

As Pacific Northwestern and national religious leaders, we are grateful for the treasure that is the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon. It is home to an abundance of God’s creatures. As the Psalmist declares, “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it.” God’s creation is not ours, but God has put it in our human care. This year, God’s creation near the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument needs our special attention and stewardship.

The Cascade Siskiyou National Monument contains one of the most biodiverse areas in the United States. Thanks to our nation’s conservation efforts by naming it a National Monument in 2000 and making the Soda Mountain Wilderness Area within it in 2009, the unique interconnected web of God’s creation in this region has a good chance of remaining intact.

Yet, a growing number of scientists are reporting that the boundaries of the Monument do not fully align with the needs of God’s web of creation, imperiling God’s beloved creatures. A patchwork of vital habitats and watersheds remain unprotected, and if they were to be harmed, we could disrupt the wildlife safe-haven our communities have striven to create over the past 16 years.

Furthermore, climate change is putting unprecedented stress on God’s creation. Creatures and vegetation are feeling pressure from warmer temperatures and the arrival of invasive species. We confess to our complicity in contributing to climate change. We are called to restore a right relationship with God’s creation by swiftly taking conservation action. May we share the gifts of God’s creation with all plants and animals, so they are able to adapt to climate change and migrate if necessary.

God’s creation helps us know our Creator. Please act with urgency to care for God’s creation with the reverence it merits, and expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument this year.

In Hope,
Bishop Marc Andrus  
Diocese of California, The Episcopal Church  
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The Rt. Rev. Patrick W. Bell, Bishop  
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Rev. Holly Hallman, Regional Minister  
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Barry McPherson, Co-Chair  
Eco-Justice Team of the Presbytery of the Cascades, Presbyterian Church (USA)  
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The Right Reverend Staccato Powell  
Bishop, Western Episcopal District, AME Zion Church  
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Dr. A.J. Swoboda, Executive Director & Co-Founder
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