

Remarks at the Grand Canyon Announcing the Establishment and Expansion of National Monuments in Western States *January 11, 2000*

Thank you very much. Thank you; good morning. I know we're doing the right thing, because look at the day we've got. *[Laughter]* We've got the good Lord's stamp of approval on this great day.

Ann, thank you for your words and for your life and your example. Superintendent Arnberger, thank you and all the staff at Grand Canyon National Park. And through you, I'd like to thank all the people who work for all of our national parks. I have spent quite a good deal of time as President in the national parks of America, and I grew up in one. I am, I suppose, therefore, more personally indebted to the people who give their lives to the Park Service than perhaps any of my predecessors. But I want to thank you.

I also want to thank all the people here from the Bureau of Land Management for the work they do and for the remarkable partnership that will be launched here. We have worked very hard these last 7 years to try to get these two agencies to work together, to support each other, to believe in each other, and to have common objectives. And I think we've made a lot of progress. So I want to thank the BLM people who are here, as well. Give them all a hand, thank you. *[Applause]*

I want to thank the environmental groups who are here. I want to welcome the children who are here. We have children from Grand Canyon Middle School and St. Mary's Middle School, and we welcome them. They are a lot about what today is all about. I want to thank Congressman Ed Pastor, of Arizona; Congressman Sam Farr, from California, for joining me; and former Congresswoman Karan English, from Arizona, for being here. Thank you. And I want to thank all the people from the White House who supported me in this decision: my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, who is here; and the head of our Council of Environmental Quality, George Frampton.

I want to thank someone I want to acknowledge particularly who worked with Secretary Babbitt on this, his Counselor, Mollie McUsic, who played a big role in what we celebrate today. She's not here because she's celebrating

an even bigger production: yesterday she gave birth to her son, Benjamin, so she couldn't be here, but I want to acknowledge her and her service.

And finally, I want to say this is, as you can see, a special day for Bruce Babbitt, not only because he has been a devoted champion of the Antiquities Act and of protecting land but also because he is the former Governor of Arizona. And when we served together as Governors, we made it a habit, Hillary and I did, at least once a year at these Governors' meetings to have dinner with Bruce and Hattie Babbitt. And he was giving me the speech that he gave here today 15 or 20 years ago. *[Laughter]* I've heard Bruce's speech a lot now, but it gets better every time he gives it. *[Laughter]*

Our country has been blessed by some outstanding Secretaries of the Interior, Gifford Pinchot, Harold Ickes. But I'll make a prediction: I believe when our time here is done and a fair analysis of the record is made, there will be no Secretary of the Interior in the history of the United States who has done as much to preserve our natural heritage as Bruce Babbitt, and I thank him for that.

Secretary Babbitt talked about Theodore Roosevelt's role. You might be interested to know that it was exactly 92 years ago today, on January 11, 1908, that he designated the Grand Canyon as one of our Nation's first national monuments. Now the first light falls on the 21st century and this breathtaking landscape he helped to protect. None of you who can see what is behind me can doubt the wisdom of that decision. And so it is altogether fitting that on this day and in this place we continue that great journey.

This morning, on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, I designated three new national monuments and the expansion of a fourth to make sure more of the land that belongs to the American people will always be enjoyed by them. What a remarkable place this Canyon is. It is in so many ways the symbol of our great natural expanse, our beauty, and our spirit.

Thirty years ago, for the first time, I watched the Sun set over the Grand Canyon for over 2 hours. This morning I got up and for about