

P. O. Box 559
Lone Pine, California
August 21, 1963

Senator Thomas E. Kuchel
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator:

Last week I was told by the local Forest Ranger that much of the Sierras in Inyo County are to be set aside as wilderness area. I favor the Wilderness Bill and have been appreciative of your efforts in behalf of its passage.

However, neither I nor any of my acquaintance had any idea that the creation of a wilderness area would threaten the actual destruction of borderline personal property of a non-commercial nature. It is to advise you of this situation that I am now writing.

I am one of the founders of a philosophical group which owns 430 acres in the Tuttle Creek area near Lone Pine. In order to have a quiet retreat for our summer discussions, we built a lodge about 3000 yards up the canyon bordering our property. It took us twenty years, working in the summers with volunteer labor, to construct this 2000-square-foot building of natural stone and concrete, with concrete floor and heavy beamed roof and fireplace.

Now I am told that if the wilderness area is extended far enough outward, we will be asked to destroy this building.

Although this lodge is used only in the summers, when our members can get away from jobs in the cities, and although we must periodically repair the vandalism of hunters and campers, this meeting place is the very heart of our group. We put the biggest part of our money into it and the land near it, where several of us now reside permanently. Others live in the town of Lone Pine. To destroy it would destroy the purpose of years of effort on the part of many people. We could never do it, Senator. We do not want to see a situation develop that would do this injustice to us and cause us to resist to the point of disregard of consequences.

There is an easy alternative--but easy only before the wilderness boundaries are established. This is simply to draw the boundaries a few hundred feet west of our lodge, which is far down the canyon and by no means in virgin territory.

We are of course sending a similar letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, but we feel that the action which will preserve for us the result of twenty years' labor will be taken by our elected Republican representative. We believe that you will, as we do, take the reasonable position that a wilderness area should only be preserved, rather than created by destruction in border zones where men and women were assured--as we were thirty years ago, by documents we still have--that their property in the National Forest would be allowed to remain for them and their descendants.

We will all appreciate any help you can give us.

Respectfully yours,

Franklin F. Wolff