



BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

A partnership of the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah & Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni Governments

U.S. Congress adjourns, failing to protect Native American sacred sites, again ***Statement from the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition calling for a National Monument***

Monument Valley, UT (December 15, 2016) - Last week, the U.S. Congress adjourned without a resolution on the call to protect the Bears Ears region in Southeastern Utah. The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition reiterates its call to for President Obama to act and designate Bears Ears National Monument before he leaves office.

Utah's elected officials had years to act to protect Bears Ears. Instead of attempting serious legislation, they stalled and blocked any real attempts at legislative progress. The Bears Ears region is the most important unprotected cultural landscape in the nation. It contains tens of thousands of Native American and archeological sites. The region faces an urgent need for conservation. Congress has turned their back on the protection of sites sacred to Tribal Nations, leaving Bears Ears at risk to the [continued threats of graverobbing and vandalism](#), while destructive uranium, oil and gas, and potash mining projects are being proposed.

The [National Congress of American Indians and 30 Native American Tribes](#) with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to the Bears Ears region have come together to ask President Obama to protect Bears Ears. Now is the time for a Bears Ears National Monument.

Utah's Governor and congressional delegation have stated they believe it is important to protect areas within the Bears Ears region, yet the failure of a good faith effort to pass sound legislation to provide the protections needed to safeguard the homelands of our ancestors belies those claims.

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) waited until the last minute to introduce legislation that [fell woefully short of the comprehensive proposal put forth by the Tribes](#). The conservation area proposed for a portion of the Bears Ears region would have provided fewer protections than other National Conservation Areas (NCA) passed by Congress, and contained loopholes that would make it impossible for land managers to adequately protect cultural and natural resources. Because of the [series of delays](#), the bill did not move forward. In addition, Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) failed to even introduce a companion Public Lands Initiative bill in the Senate.

We are more certain than ever that the best path forward to protect the Bears Ears region, and ensure a strong and meaningful Native American voice in monument management is for President Obama to designate a Bears Ears National Monument.

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The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition formed in July 2015 with the mission to protect and preserve the Bears Ears region, to which they have ancestral and contemporary ties. The Bears Ears National Monument proposal is named for the Bears Ears buttes – two prominent landforms at the center of a landscape rich in antiquities, with more than 100,000 archaeological and cultural

sites that are sacred to dozens of tribes. However, rampant looting and destruction of the region's structures, artwork, and gravesites is ongoing. www.ProtectBearsEars.org.