



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

August 28, 2017

President Donald Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, we write to express our concerns with the Administration's review of National Monuments. On August 24, Interior Secretary Zinke announced he has submitted his recommendations to you after completing his review of these Monuments. We ask you to use your Executive Authority to protect our country's heritage and honor the trust responsibility to sovereign Tribal Nations. We call on you to make no changes to any Monument designations.

NCAI submitted comments to the Department of Interior for both comment periods on this subject, supporting Bears Ears National Monument and later supporting 18 additional Monument designations under review. Substantial Tribal objects of historical and cultural significance can be found within the lands covered by these Monument designations.

The Federal Government's trust responsibility to Tribal Nations obligates Federal decision makers, including the Secretary of Interior and the President, to act in the best interests of those Nations. Preserving and protecting ancient and sacred places like the Bears Ears National Monument is not only critical to protecting America's heritage, it is imperative to the Federal Government's honoring of its Nation-to-Nation relationships with sovereign Tribal Nations.

Before you make a final decision, we ask you that you consider and uphold the Federal Government's trust responsibility to Tribal Nations by releasing the Department of Interior's Recommendations and sending the full report to each affected Tribal Nation. As you make your final decision, we urge you to prioritize protecting areas critical to Tribal culture and heritage and that contain objects of antiquity. The original purpose of the Antiquities Act was to protect Tribal cultural resources on federal lands. Removing or reducing designations in size would be inconsistent with Congress's original intent.

We urge you to make no changes to National Monument designations including Bears Ears National Monument. Protecting these places, in their entirety, is essential to upholding the Federal trust responsibility to Tribal Nations.

Respectfully,

Brian Cladoosby (handwritten signature)

Brian Cladoosby
President
National Congress of American Indians

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