

From: <Catherine_Callaway@ios.doi.gov>
To: Randal_Bowman@ios.doi.gov
Subject: DCN: EST-00003293 - Antiquities Act
Date: Thursday, July 13, 2017 10:41:49 AM
Attachments: [3293 in.pdf](#)

FYI



June 14, 2017

Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240
Email: miles.janssen@bia.gov, james_cason@ios.doi.gov, exsec_exsec@ios.doi.gov,

Re: Docket No. DOI-2017-0002, Review of Certain National Monuments Established Since 1996

Dear Secretary Zinke,

Thank you for re-opening the comment period on Bears Ears National Monument until July 10th, 2017. As stated in the many letters Navajo Nation Chapter House governments have sent you since March, we invite you to attend a community listening session in Monument Valley, Utah to discuss the Bears Ears National Monument prior to the close of this comment period. Our communities were ready to meet with you during your visit in May, but you neither shared your schedule nor left the northern half of San Juan County. We want to meet with you in southern San Juan County and explain why we have worked so hard over the past seven years to protect this sacred landscape.

During your confirmation hearing, you stated that your first official order of business was to talk to local community members in Utah before making a recommendation to the President of the United States about the Bears Ears National Monument. Despite your brief time in Utah, you have yet to engage the local community in a meaningful manner. The majority of San Juan County residents are Native Americans who support the monument, and 60% of residents live south of Blanding, Utah. We wrote the original proposal that formed the basis of the National Monument, and we continue to support the National Monument today, despite the struggle to be heard by the Utah delegation.

The Bears Ears National Monument continues to be a place of healing for our people, a place where we gather firewood, plants and medicinal herbs. Bears Ears is also a place that is in need of protection. You mentioned in the interim report that "BENM contain(s) some objects that are appropriate for protection under the Act. This includes rock art, dwellings, ceremonial sites, granaries, and other cultural resources." Yet you fail to recognize that **the landscape itself** is inseparable from the values it holds in the areas of plants, animals, geologic features, spring, and its natural beauty. In fact, it is the entirety of the landscape that saved Navajo people and our cultural traditions. In 1862, hundreds of our ancestors found refuge from the trauma of "The Long Walk," when Navajos were rounded up by the U.S. Cavalry under the command of Kit Carson and forced to walk 300 miles to New Mexico. We hid out for years in canyons on the west side of the present-day National Monument, including White, Red, Nokai, Lake, and similar vast expanses that remain hard to traverse. The very nature of this landscape—rough, inhospitable, and unforgiving—is what saved us, and the protective status now governing it memorializes the hardships of the Navajo people. We find your oversight especially puzzling because the Supreme Court has long acknowledged that the Antiquities Act is meant to protect the landscape, and past presidents have used the Act for that purpose for an even longer period. We are confident that you will recognize

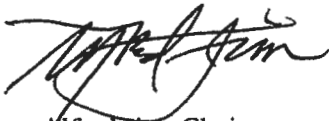
Navajo Utah Commission • P.O. Box 570 • Montezuma Creek, Utah 84534
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the overly narrow view of the interim report once you hear of the landscape's relationship to our community from the community itself—and from the whole community.

We therefore ask that you come meet with our tribal officials and our local tribal members in the southern half of the county. Please meet with spiritual leaders and tribal members who offer unique perspectives on what these ancestral lands mean to our Tribes and listen to our views about the origins of this historic monument. We urge you to respect the historic significance of this monument for Indian County and honor Tribes by reconsidering your recommendation to shrink our sacred landscape that is now protected as Bears Ears National Monument. We urge you to read the passage in the proclamation that acknowledges our traditional knowledge itself as a resource to be protected.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and hope you will come to Monument Valley, Utah prior to July 10th.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred Jim", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alfred Jim, Chairperson
NAVAJO UTAH COMMISSION



1 message

Mon, Jun 26, 2017 at 9:13 AM

Cc: Juliette Lillie <juliette_lillie@ios.doi.gov>, Robert Howarth <robert_howarth@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Hommel <scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov>

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