

To: scheduling_sio@ios.doi.gov[scheduling_sio@ios.doi.gov]
From: Debbie Richards
Sent: 2017-06-30T17:35:30-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Please protect Escalante Grand Staircase!
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(b) (6) We vacation in this beautiful state and just returned from Escalante Grand Staircase where we were awed and inspired by the beauty, history, and recreational opportunities. This is a peaceful, important, and sacred area. We saw license plates from all over the country and met families from all over the world. **Please do not shrink the Grand Staircase National Monument.**

I am not unaware that this land could be (no guarantees with mining) valuable for stripping and ranching. I am aware that Utah's number one export is precious metals. We ship our ever-increasing valuable resources to China, and we get depreciating additions to our landfills in return. We do not need more areas for ranching. I understand the argument for mining is touted to increase the economy in these small Utah towns. That is short-sighted and misguided. Every mining town of which I am aware eventually becomes a ghost town once the land is stripped. Whereas, protecting Escalante Grand Staircase provides a **permanent** economy of tourism, permanent recreation opportunities, permanent habitats for necessary ecosystems. The waterways in this desert cannot support a mass influx of laborers and machinery without permanently destroying this beautiful country and the farmers that depend on our water supply to produce FOOD!

It appears the only proponents of reducing the size of this monument are those interested in short-term financial gains. The locals are adamantly opposed, and so is my immediate and extended family. In respect for those who live there now, who lived there 1,000 years ago, and future generations, please let your legacy be one of protecting and raising America, not destroying it.

Thank you for accepting input.

J. Dennis Richards and Family

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