

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 4, 2026

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong opposition to your July 13, 2026, proclamations that stripped protections for Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. These actions attempt to remove nearly three million acres from monument protection and placed irreplaceable cultural, historic, scientific, ecological, and recreational resources at risk of destruction and loss.

National monuments have preserved our country's unique public lands, extraordinary history, and common culture for 120 years. Grand Staircase-Escalante, established in 1996, contains world-class paleontological resources, the ancestral and current homelands of multiple Tribal Nations, striking geologic formations, unique plants and animals, stunning dark night skies, and landscapes that support robust local outdoor recreation economies. Bears Ears, established in 2016, is America's first truly tribally-driven national monument. The proposal was led by five sovereign Tribal Nations.

Each monument is a living cultural landscape with deep spiritual and ancestral importance to multiple Tribal Nations, including the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe and the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians. These places are not abstractions on a map; they are homelands and sacred sites that deserve enduring protection, and enhanced recognition secured by the previous monument declaration.

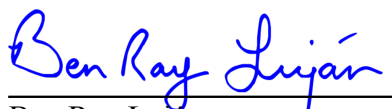
We are especially troubled that the Bears Ears proclamation disbanded the Bears Ears Commission, a landmark model of collaborative management between sovereign Tribal Nations and the federal government. Tribal leaders have made clear that Bears Ears is a sacred ancestral homeland, and that decisions affecting it must be made through meaningful government-to-government consultation. The Department of the Interior had previously committed to meeting with the Bears Ears Commission if changes to the monument were under consideration; no such meeting occurred before these proclamations were signed. Any major policy action regarding these culturally important places requires meaningful government-to-government consultation.

National monuments enjoy widespread public support and serve as economic drivers across the United States. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$1.3 trillion in gross output and accounts for \$9.75 billion in Utah alone. The localities surrounding national monuments have seen growth in income and employment since their designations. We reject the premise that monuments are incompatible with rural prosperity or responsible public access. Despite your

false claims that people cannot walk, hunt or fish in these monuments, monument designations support outdoor recreation, heritage tourism, hunting and fishing, scientific research, grazing under appropriate management, and durable local economies. At the same time, monument status prevents the loss of cultural and natural resources that cannot be replaced once damaged. By attempting, yet again, to eliminate vast portions of these monuments, your Administration invites needless uncertainty to the stability that local communities, Tribes, land managers, scientists, recreation users, and businesses need. Not just in Utah, but for all local communities that rely on the stability of our national monuments.

The Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments are national treasures. The American people deserve public lands policy grounded in law, science, respect for Tribal sovereignty, and stewardship—not political decisions against the desires of the vast majority of Americans. We stand with Tribal Nations, local communities, scientists, conservationists, outdoor recreation businesses, and Americans across the country who believe these landscapes should remain protected.

Sincerely,



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



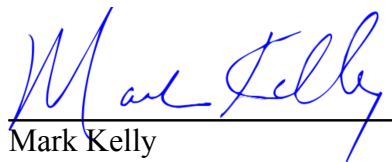
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



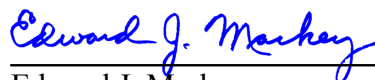
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



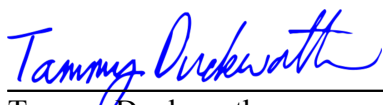
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



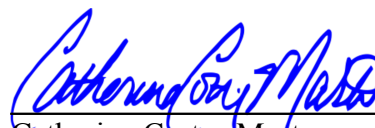
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



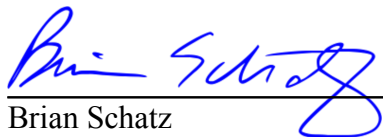
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



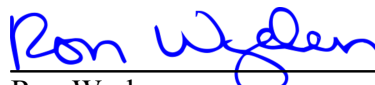
Tina Smith
United States Senator



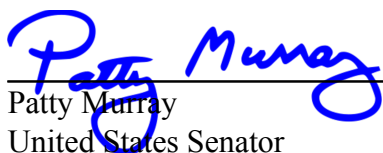
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



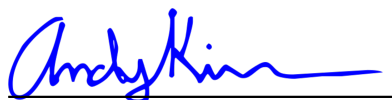
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



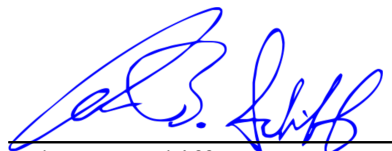
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



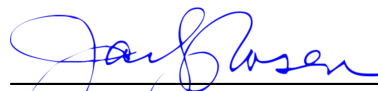
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



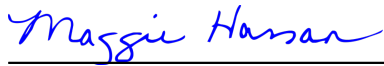
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



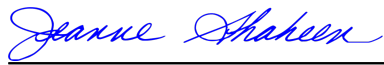
Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Douglas Burgum, Secretary of the Interior