

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As our letter on February 16 stated, we urge the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to postpone the development of management plans for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments until legal challenges regarding the President's actions have been resolved. As our previous letter details, the president lacks the authority to revoke or reduce previously established national monuments—that authority is reserved to Congress. We strongly disagree with the Department of the Interior's decision to rush into the planning process for these landscapes based on proclamations which are being challenged in court and are likely to be overturned.

Additionally, the public has made clear they believe that national monuments should remain protected. Less than a year ago, nearly 3 million Americans submitted comments to the Department in reference to the review initiated by Executive Order 13792. A third-party analysis of these comments found that over 99% supported leaving national monument protections in place.

It has come to our attention that the BLM does not plan to consider the input or findings from these millions of comments during this rushed planning process they have undertaken. Further, we have heard that BLM staff will not be considering comments during this process regarding objects, resources and values within the over one million acres that were eliminated from Bears Ears National Monument – despite the likelihood that ongoing legal cases will impact future management of these lands. Finally, we are unaware of any plan to conduct meaningful tribal consultation with any of the tribes who have cultural ties to this region, many of which still live in the area today.

The failure to take into account a historic outpouring of support from the public as well as the failure to consider proper management to protect resources that have been eliminated via legally dubious actions is further evidence that this management process should be postponed.

At a minimum, the BLM should include and take into consideration any comments received in reference to Executive Order 13792 that reference Bears Ears National Monument and/or Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in the relevant Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Ignoring these comments when conducting the scoping process for the same monuments which inspired this public engagement would be a disservice to the public and to the proper care and management of our public lands. The BLM should also consider comments related to objects and values within the boundaries identified in Proclamation No. 9558 establishing the Bears Ears National Monument and Proclamation 6920 establishing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National

Monument. Failing to do so would leave large swaths of land and historic, cultural and natural resources without proper protection as well as increase the risk of wasted time and money when the courts rule that President Trump lacked the legal authority to reduce these monuments. Finally before proceeding with any new management plan, the BLM should conduct meaningful tribal consultation with all tribes who have cultural ties to the region.

We continue to urge you not to move forward with developing any management plans for Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. Failing that, we urge the BLM to at a minimum appropriately consider all comments received in response to Executive Order 13792 as well as comments during the scoping related to managing these lands in line with the original proclamations that established these monuments.


Sincerely,




Tom Udall
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator




Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator




Ron Wyden
United States Senator



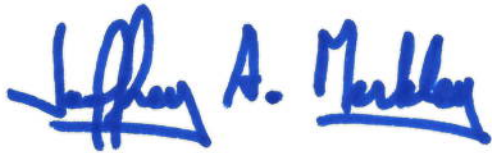
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United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



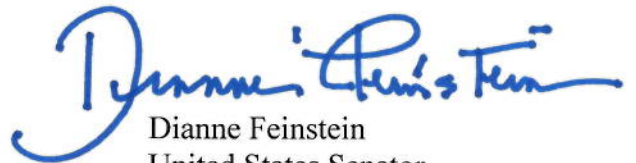
Jeffery A. Merkley
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



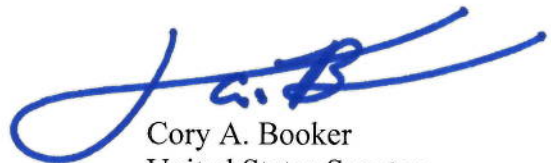
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United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
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Brian Schatz
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