



International Mayan League * Robert Bracamontes, Acjachemen Nation, Juaneno Tribe

July 10, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Via <https://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=DOI-2017-0002-0001>

Re: Maintain National Monuments

Dear Secretary Zinke and Secretary Ross:

We oppose review of national monuments pursuant to Executive Order 13792 and related actions. The U.S. Department of the Interior has identified 27 monuments that could be scaled back or even eliminated. Secretary Zinke issued an interim report recommending that Bears Ears monument in Utah be reduced. The Department of Commerce is reviewing marine monuments.

We submit these comments on behalf of Next 100 Coalition, a group of over 50 organizations committed to a just and inclusive system of our nation's parks and public lands and waters; GreenLatinos, an international network of conservation, environmental justice, and health equity allies; The City Project, a civil rights and environmental justice non-profit team; International Mayan League, a Maya organization that acts against threats and violations affecting our peoples, the earth, and humanity; and Robert Bracamontes, Bob Black Crow, Yu-va'-tal 'A'lla-mal (Black Crow), Acjachemen Nation, Juaneno Tribe.

Now is the time to defend our national heritage. The review targets and threatens monuments that focus on the history and culture of diverse communities. An attack on one monument is an attack on all monuments. The order is an attack on the Antiquities Act, on the rule of law, and on democratic governance. We the people are the ultimate check on government.

“If we want our system of parks and public lands to reflect the incredible diversity of America, then the Antiquities Act is a crucial tool for achieving that goal. Congress is not always able or willing to act quickly enough — or frankly creatively enough — to recognize and preserve sites with cultural or historic significance. Without the act, we might not have sites honoring people like Cesar Chavez or Harriet Tubman or events like Stonewall,” says Arizona Rep. Raúl Grijalva, lead Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources. Ranking Members Grijalva, Nydia Velásquez and Tim Waltz of the Committees on Natural Resources, Veterans Affairs, and Small Business held a forum on the Hill, June 8, on the order.

A diverse group of advocates testified on the values at stake: Hugo Turek, a Montana rancher, testified that even a rural state with more cattle than people needs monument protection. Megan Duffy from retailer Patagonia testified about economic benefits of outdoor recreation — \$887 billion, 7.6 million jobs, and \$125 billion in tax revenue per year. Carrie Hamblen of Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce and an LGBTQ leader, testified about civic engagement and pride in support of White Sands, Prehistoric Trackways and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks monuments. Robert Vessels, a U.S. Army veteran, testified about empowering service members, their families and veterans by providing access to the outdoors and developing volunteer leadership skills. Robert García testified on behalf of Next 100 Coalition, GreenLatinos, and the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign.

Support the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

The list of 27 monuments under review targets the San Gabriel Mountains and six others in California alone: Berryessa Snow Mountain, Carrizo Plain, Cascade Siskiyou, Giant Sequoia, Mojave Trails, and Sand to Snow National Monuments.

The San Gabriel Mountains Forever coalition, for example, as discussed at the June 8 Congressional Forum, has worked for more than a decade to earn local support for this monument. The official Community Collaborative has worked with the U.S. Forest Service for three years developing the management plan. Community needs have driven designation and planning from the start.

“We were able to come up with a document that we can all support, which is the first time this has been done when a national monument has been designated to serve the recreational needs of such a large, urban population,” says Liz Reilly, city of Duarte, California, councilwoman, and a member of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.

The monument serves 15 million Los Angeles residents in the nation’s second largest urban center, includes 350,000 acres of the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests, and logs more than 4 million visits per year. It holds evidence of more than 8,000 years of Native American history, 600 archeological sites, and pictographs, and hosts a wide variety of year-round activities. The area provides Angelinos with 70 percent of their open space and 30 percent of their drinking water. And, in Los Angeles County, which is park poor, this monument promotes equal access to parks, waters, recreation, climate justice, health equity, quality jobs and education, especially for low income children and children of color. Civil rights groups, health equity and social justice advocates, Native Americans, youth leaders, conservation groups, local governments, gun owners, hunters, hikers, cabin owners, off-road vehicle users and businesses oppose this review.

Native American Culture, History, and Sacred Sites

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, passed a resolution and submitted public comments urging the Administration to preserve all National Monument boundaries as they were originally designated and to not limit them in size. NCAI urges the Administration to preserve and protect all National Monuments with distinct historic and cultural value to Tribes. NCAI continues to oppose any attempt to take tribal, federal, state, and county land and sacred landscapes. NCAI urges the Department of Interior to meaningfully consult with Tribal Governments or Tribal Government Coalitions affected by Executive Order 13792. These monuments include, for example, Bears Ears, Gold Butte, and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. In California alone, these include Berryessa Snow Mountain, Carrizo Plain,

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Cascade-Siskiyou, Castle Mountains, Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and San Gabriel Mountains National Mountains. See National Congress of American Indians, *Public Comments and Resolution re: Maintain Designations of National Monuments* (July 10, 2017).

The federal district court ruled that the US Army Corps of Engineers violated the rights of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe when the USACE did not adequately consider their rights under federal law in reviewing the Dakota Access Pipeline. *Standing Rock Sioux Tribe v. USACE*, Civ. No. 16-1534 (JEB) (D.C.D.C. June 14, 2017), at 47-54 and 66-67.

We stand with our Native American and indigenous sisters and brothers to defend their rights, these monuments, the earth, and her people.

Celebrate the Values at Stake

President Barack Obama listened to the community in designating the San Gabriels monument. This review denigrates the work that brought diverse communities together, from those in urban neighborhoods fighting for equal access to nature and recreation, to others protecting cultural identity. Monuments and the great outdoors have the power to improve mental and physical health, enhance learning, and transform lives. Review puts the money interest of oil drilling and mining companies, big business and developers ahead of the needs of the people. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra has vowed to protect monuments in the state.

“A significant number of those national monuments designated since 1996 have helped paint a more diverse, inclusive picture of America’s past. These actions have resulted in increased interest among people of color in the health and vitality of our nation’s monuments, parks, historic landmarks and other public lands. A 2016 New America poll found that 93 percent of voters of color said it was important for the next president to continue a commitment of protecting public lands and the diverse histories, cultures, and experiences they represent,” according to Audrey Peterman from Next 100 Coalition.

Support the Antiquities Act

Since 1906, 16 presidents, Republican and Democrat, have used the Antiquities Act to preserve 152 national monuments. It is one of the nation’s oldest and most successful laws to conserve our environment and cultural heritage and should be preserved.

No president has ever before sought to reduce or eliminate a national monument designated by a prior president. Congress delegated to the president the authority to create national monuments. There is no doubt that the monuments under review were lawfully designated. Only Congress can change those designations, according to public comments submitted by 121 law professors.

We stand in solidarity and resistance with the people to support national monuments and the Antiquities Act.

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Very truly yours,

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| Robert García Director-Counsel | Kevin Bryan Senior Policy Director | Mark Magaña President | Juanita Cabrera Lopez Executive Director | Robert Bracamontes Bob Black Crow, Yu-va'-tal 'A'lla-mal |
| The City Project | Next 100 Coalition | GreenLatinos | International Mayan League Maya Mam | Acjachemen Nation, Juaneno Tribe |

Resources

NRDems Forum: *A Monumental Mistake: The Implications of President Trump's Executive Order on National Monuments*, June 8, 2017. democrats-naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/a-monumental-mistake-the-implications-of-president-trumps-executive-order-on-national-monuments

Aubrey Peterman, *Our national monuments could disappear if we don't act now*, The Hill, July 7, 2017. thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/energy-environment/340909-our-national-monuments-could-disappear. The New Media poll is available at newamericamedia.org/2016/08/an-untapped-natural-resource-our-national-public-lands-and-the-new-america.php.

San Gabriel Mountains Forever and Community Collaborative, *Overwhelming Support for Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Compliance*, The City Project Blog, Feb. 17, 2017. www.cityprojectca.org/blog/archives/44232.

National Congress of American Indians, *Public Comments and Resolution re: Maintain Designations of National Monuments* (July 10, 2017). www.ncai.org/attachments/PolicyPaper_nPEhdzaQCHkWyYeNfSxQOXqJfOZeuyFoFSvIqjLoDWbDpCypou_National%20Monuments%20SUBMITTED%20w%20Resolutions.pdf.

Presidential Memorandum, *Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Our National Parks, National Forests, and other Public Lands and Waters* (Jan. 12, 2017). obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/12/presidential-memorandum-promoting-diversity-and-inclusion-our-national.

Public comments from 121 law professors re: *the president does not have power to eliminate or shrink national monuments*, July 6, 2017, and authorities cited. legal-planet.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/national-monuments-comment-letter-from-law-professors_as-filed.pdf.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Committee Report, *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity* (2017) (social determinants of health includes access to healthy parks and recreation). www.nationalacademies.org/promotehealthequity.

Next 100 Coalition, next100coalition.org

GreenLatinos, www.greenlatinos.org

The City Project, www.cityprojectca.org

International Mayan League, www.mayanleague.org