

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear President Trump and Secretary Burgum:

We write to express our strong opposition to President Trump's July 13, 2026 proclamations that illegally redrew the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. These actions removed nearly three million acres from monument protection, reduced each monument by more than 90 percent, and placed irreplaceable cultural, historic, scientific, ecological, and recreational resources at risk of destruction and loss. This is an illegal attack on the integrity and legacy of the Antiquities Act as well as Tribal co-stewardship of public lands.

We are concerned that the monument's borders were illegally reduced to benefit extractive industries and corporate interests. In fact, numerous reports have detailed the mining industry's benefit through insider trading and preemptive claim staking within the monument's borders. The 60-day window after the proclamations were signed has elapsed, allowing the administration to authorize new mineral leasing, oil and gas drilling, and mining claims within the previous boundaries of the monuments. This establishes a dangerous precedent that risks jeopardizing the integrity of these protected landscapes.

For more than 120 years, national monuments have preserved America's unique public lands, extraordinary history, and cultural heritage. Grand Staircase-Escalante 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 is a living cultural landscape with deep spiritual and ancestral importance to several sovereign Tribal Nations and is full of sacred sites that deserve enduring protection.

We are especially troubled that the President's proclamation disbanded the Bears Ears Commission, a first-of-its kind model of collaborative management between the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, and the Bureau of Land Management. Tribal leaders have always made clear

that Bears Ears is a sacred ancestral homeland and decisions affecting it must be made through meaningful government-to-government consultation. The Department of the Interior had previously committed to meet with the Bears Ears Commission if changes to the monument were under consideration; no such meeting occurred before these proclamations were signed, representing yet another broken promise to the Tribes. Just one week after the proclamation was signed, the Bureau of Land Management removed from official signs the seals of the Tribal nations who were a part of the Inter-Tribal Coalition, a physical manifestation of the Trump administration's unwillingness to consult with Tribal governments on land management decisions. Representatives for the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition have also reported that they were not consulted before the monument was illegally reduced.

The Antiquities Act authorizes presidents to protect historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest. It does not grant presidents the power to undo or reduce national monuments established by their predecessors. Congress has retained authority over the disposition and management of federal public lands, and past efforts to slash Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante were immediately challenged in federal court. By again attempting to eliminate vast portions of these monuments, the administration invites needless uncertainty and undermines the stability that local communities, Tribes, land managers, scientists, recreation users, and businesses need.

The lands removed from protection are not empty spaces: they include cultural sites, paleontological resources, wildlife habitat, waterways, scenic routes, recreation areas and beloved public lands that help define southern Utah and the American landscape.

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.

Protecting public lands supports rural prosperity and responsible public access. 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.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member,  
House Committee on Natural  
Resources



Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



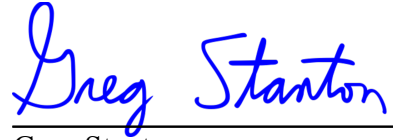
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



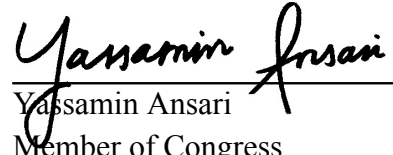
George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



JM Tokuda  
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Greg Stanton  
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Yassamin Ansari  
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Melanie Stansbury  
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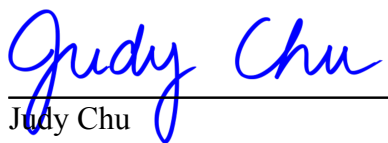
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



Ed Case  
Member of Congress



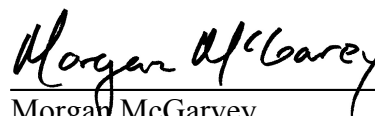
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



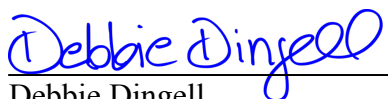
Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



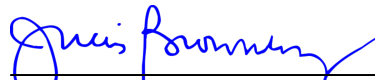
Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress



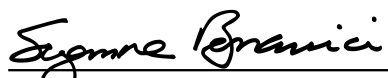
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



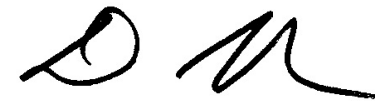
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



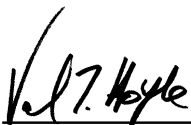
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress



Dave Min  
Member of Congress



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



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Adenita S. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



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Susie Lee  
Member of Congress



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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



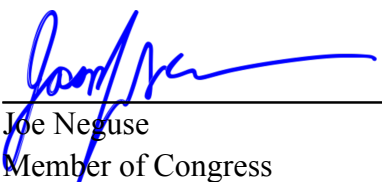
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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



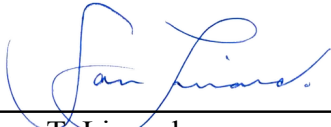
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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

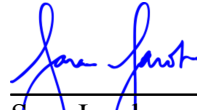


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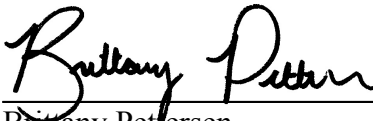
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



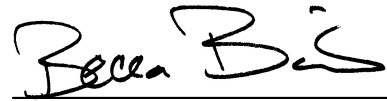
Sam T. Liecardo  
Member of Congress



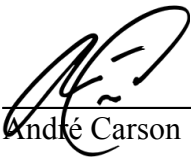
Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



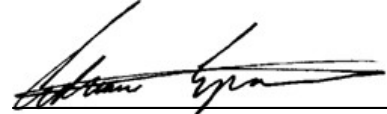
Brittany Petersen  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



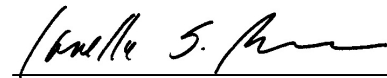
André Carson  
Member of Congress



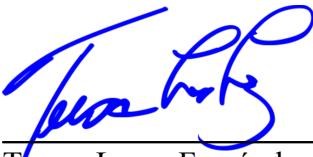
Adriano Espaillat  
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Rashida Tlaib  
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Janelle S. Bynum  
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Teresa Leger Fernández  
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Wesley Bell  
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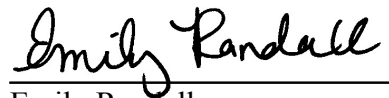
Lateefah Simon  
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Robert Garcia  
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Jason Crow  
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Emily Randall  
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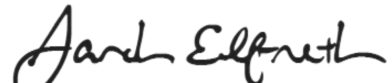
Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



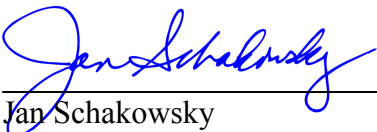
Chellie Pingree  
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Gabe Amo  
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Sarah Elfreth  
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Jan Schakowsky  
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Summer L. Lee  
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Diana DeGette  
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Kelly Morrison  
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



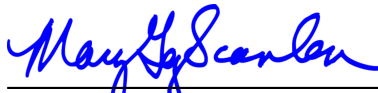
Ted W. Lieu  
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Maxine Dexter, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



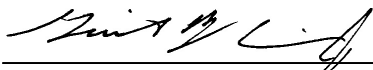
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Laura Friedman  
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Luz M. Rivas  
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Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
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