



QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation

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The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva,

On behalf of the Kw'tsán Cultural Committee, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support and commitment to the preservation of sacred lands. As the stewards of our ancestral homelands, we fully endorse your draft legislation entitled "The Great Bend of Gila National Conservation Act."

Our Tribe's connection to the land is profound and spiritual, deeply rooted in our history and cultural narratives. The story of our creator, Kukumat, and his son, Kumastamxo, forms the backbone of our existence. From Avikwame Mountain, where Kumastamxo taught our people the ways of survival, to the Gila Bend Mountains and beyond, every part of this landscape holds immense cultural and historical significance. The Great Bend of the Gila is not just a geographical feature; it is a sacred space where our ancestors' spirits still reside, and where their teachings continue to guide us.

The proposed Great Bend of the Gila National Monument would preserve these sacred trails, geoglyphs, petroglyphs, and ancient villages that tell the story of our people. These lands, rich in spiritual and natural resources, are vital for our cultural practices, ceremonies, and traditions. Protecting them ensures that future generations of Quechan people can walk the same paths, see the same landmarks, and feel the same connection to the land that we do.

The Quechan Tribal Council and the Kw'tsán Cultural Committee have supported the Great Bend of the Gila initiative since the first resolution passed on July 19, 2016, and we continue to stand by these efforts. The proposed monument aligns with our goals of preserving our cultural heritage and protecting our sacred sites from the threats of development and destruction.

We commend your efforts to establish two new national conservation areas and designate approximately 55,000 acres of new wilderness on Bureau of Land Management lands. The provisions for increased tribal co-management and consultation are particularly significant, as they ensure that our voices and expertise are integral to the management of these lands.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support. We look forward to working with you to protect these sacred spaces and preserve the cultural heritage of the Quechan people for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly 'A. K. A.', written over a horizontal line.

Kw'tsán Cultural Committee
Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe