

Statement
By Leland F. Pollock
Garfield County, Utah Commission Chair
before the
House Committee on Natural Resources,
Forgotten Voices
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Leland Pollock, and I am the chairman of the Garfield County, Utah Commission. I also serve as chairman of the National Association of Counties Public Lands Committee and have formerly served as the Chairman of the Utah Association of Counties Public Land Steering Committee. I am also the son of a National Park Service employee and literally grew up within the boundaries of Bryce Canyon National Park. I have lived on and around public lands my entire life, and understand their importance to the local communities and the nation as a whole. I love our nation's public lands - possibly more than anyone here - and will do all I can to protect and enhance their health. Based on a lifetime of experience with public lands, Garfield County and its neighbors, I believe I am informed and can accurately testify before you today. Additionally, and notwithstanding the interests of tribal members here today, I believe I am the only elected official present duly authorized to speak on behalf residents and visitors where the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) is located. No other testifier has the obligation and responsibility that I have for the lands in question.

By way of background, Garfield County is a scenic rural area roughly the size of Connecticut. Approximately 93% of the land base is under federal ownership, and I believe we are the only U.S. County that contains portions of 3 National Parks (Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef and Canyonlands). We are also home to significant portions of the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the Dixie National Forest, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, two BLM field offices, and a small segment of the Fish Lake National Forest. Private ownership is extremely limited, and is only 3% to 5% of the total land base. On that limited tax base Garfield County is responsible for schools, road maintenance, garbage collection, emergency medical services, law enforcement, search and rescue and a host of other public services for more than 3.3 million acres.

Garfield County, like Kane County, is responsible for the governmental jurisdiction and management on millions of acres of federal land within their boundaries; and until the current administration took positive action, we have been largely without a voice in how those lands were managed. If any voice has been forgotten it is the voice of the people most impacted by GSENM's designation and the local government officials charged with protecting their health, safety, welfare, custom, culture and heritage. We, the people of Garfield County and their duly elected government officials applaud the action taken by President Trump and fully support the modification, with the caveat that we believe GSENM should have been reduced to approximately 20% of its current size

to comply with Antiquity Act provisions requiring the confinement of monuments to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

I am here today to testify regarding the public process which lead to the adjustments to the boundary of the Grands Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the favorable improvements that have resulted from President Trump's action last year. For clarity, I will refer to the September, 1996 designation by President Clinton as the 1996 or Clinton monument and the December 2017 adjustment by President Trump as the 2017 or Trump monument. Additional information could be added to my testimony, but recognizing the limited time available, I specifically mention several items:

First- The committee has been completely misled by the title of this hearing. Typical of the spin associated with Washington DC propaganda, you have been twirled round and around to the point that you couldn't walk a straight line if you had to. Consideration and evaluation of the Trump monument boundary adjustments occurred under intense scrutiny for months prior to the President's formal action. Those efforts included a published Presidential order, a much-publicized and documented visit to the Clinton monument by the Secretary of Interior, an extensive aerial review of many of the lands, input by tribal, federal, state and local officials, publicized comments by special interest groups, newspaper articles, letters to the editor and a host of Internet chatter typical of decisions made in our current society. None of those actions were conducted for the 1996 Clinton designation. In fact, designation of the Clinton monument was a closely guarded secret known only to select selfish interest groups and kept hidden behind the doors of the highest officials in Washington D.C. Not even Utah's Congressman from the impacted district (and from President Clinton's political party) was given notice of the Clinton era designation until only a few minutes before the announcement actually took place.

Additionally, the Interior Department and federal, state and local representatives received numerous telephone calls, emails, letters and comments from citizens within and without their jurisdictions. No voice was forgotten; nothing inappropriate took place; and if anyone describes the process as an inadequate review and improper alteration, they must decry with increased fervor that the Clinton designation was a complete travesty and abrogation of presidential power. Although the final detailed boundaries of Trump's monument designation were not known, anyone who wasn't misguided by Washington D.C. spin knew evaluations were taking place and made appropriate suggestions. The process took months and months and considered careful evaluations. As mentioned above Garfield County's position is that President Trump's adjustments are at least five times larger than GSENM needs to be; and if the collective governments of Kane and Garfield County – those that know the land the best – could have the authority of the Antiquities Act we would reduce it that much more. This committee is starting with the false premise. No voice was forgotten. All were heard. All information was considered. We recognize that some people may be unhappy with the decision; but as a duly elected public official, I testify that President Trump's action was publicly known, publicly reviewed and beneficial for the health, safety, and welfare, custom, culture, and heritage of the residents of Garfield County and its visitors.

Second- all levels of government support President Trump's action. President Trump is the head of our federal government. He obviously supports it, or he wouldn't have taken the action. The

state of Utah's federal representatives – our Congressmen and Senators - supported the adjustment, and contrary to the manner in which the Clinton monument designation took place, were advised and consulted in the action. They supported President Trump's designation with unanimity and vehemence. The governor of the State of Utah supported the change, as evidenced by his signature on a Concurrent Resolution urging federal legislation to reduce or modify the boundaries of the Clinton monument. State support was further urged by duly elected state representatives and senators in the State of Utah's Legislature who cast votes in favor of the Concurrent Resolution at ratios of more than 5 to 1 in the House and more than 6 to 1 in the Senate. So months before the Trump adjustment took place the elected officials who represent all of the residents and visitors in the State of Utah strongly supported reduction of the Clinton monument boundaries. Those on the minority side of the vote can say that they were out voted, but they cannot say that they were not heard, that there was inadequate review and that the adjustment took place improperly.

State of Utah officials followed that initial urging a year later by passing another Concurrent Resolution supporting President Trump's designation and supporting Representative Chris Stewart's bill which would ratify the Trump designation and further solidify protections for objects designated by President Trump. The supportive actions by the Utah State Legislature after Trump's announcement passed by similar margins as those of the previous year. The State of Utah, through the public actions of its designated/elected representatives, completely supports and appreciates the efforts of President Trump to adjust the Clinton monument boundaries.

Local officials were not to be left behind in their desires for President Trump to modify and adjust the Clinton monument boundaries. For more than two decades County Commissioners in Kane and Garfield Counties had decried the underhanded and unscrupulous way in which President Clinton abused his power in 1996. For more than 20 years County Commissioners have unanimously and vociferously objected to the ridiculously large boundaries designated by President Clinton. Those same Commissioners have had to struggle along to provide road maintenance, garbage collection and disposal, emergency medical services, law enforcement, search and rescue, and all other public services on nearly 2,000,000 acres while being handcuffed and hamstrung by federal officials that hang a monument designation over the County officials head, when in reality the land is largely neglected and has deteriorated by the advancement of invasive vegetation and accelerated erosion. Kane and Garfield Counties also passed resolutions supporting the Trump adjustments and felt President Trump should have gone much farther in reducing the boundaries. The elected local officials spoke with state officials and urged the passage of the 2017 and 2018 Concurrent State Resolutions. All of this was done in the daylight of public review and public comment. Prior to passage of Garfield County's resolution supporting the Trump designation, Garfield County conducted the largest, most extensive public comment and review period the County has ever undertaken. Crowd control, law enforcement and organized seating arrangements were developed, so the greatest number of the public could express their views. The County Commission carefully weighed the comments, interests and issues associated with adjustments to the Clinton monument. Unanimously, without equivocation, and with full support of the vast majority of the voters that elected them the County Commission voted unanimously to support President Trump. That support is even stronger today! As further evidence of acceptance of the Trump modification, two of the three County Commissioners who voted in support of President Trump were up for re-election in

November 2018. Both of the Commissioners ran unopposed and won in landslide votes. If there had been a failure to properly review and properly vet public opinion on the single most talked about and contentious issue associated with Garfield County, somebody would have run against the Commissioners, and voting would have been much closer; but that wasn't the case. The locals who have to live with decision, the locals who know the land, the locals who have suffered under the Clinton monument suppression, the locals who were not spun into dizziness by DC propaganda supported the action of their Commissioners.

All of this evidence is not to say that there weren't some opposed. In the contentious society in which we live there is opposition in all things. However, that opposition was either a) an extremely small minority that were given the opportunity to express their views but failed to bring sufficient evidence to get their way; or b) individuals who don't live anywhere near the area and choose to come to Garfield and Kane Counties to take advantage of our amenities without paying their fair share of the cost for the burdens they impose. This latter case is exemplified by the mayor of Salt Lake City who spoke in opposition to President Trump's modification. She lives approximately 4 hours away from the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and has no management responsibility over the land or obligation to resolve the burdensome difficulties created by Clinton's designation. Her opposition to Trump's monument boundary adjustments is similar to a Washington DC mayor attempting to influence the lunch schedules in the Cleveland Ohio public schools. And yet, her voice were heard and considered.

The conclusion: Every level of government – federal, state and local - fully and emphatically supports the Trump modification; and those local elected officials that are responsible for the health, safety, welfare, and custom, culture, and heritage of the area are the strongest supporters.

Third – The Clinton monument hurt the people of Kane and Garfield Counties and was especially detrimental to families in Escalante, Utah. Since 1996 there has been a decline in population in Escalante – in a state that has one of the highest growth rates in the country! Particularly egregious consequences of Clinton's clandestine consideration and unreasonable designation are the impacts on the high school in Escalante. Prior to the Clinton designation, Escalante High School (grades seven through twelve) had a stable to growing enrollment of approximately 150 students. In the 23 years since the Clinton travesty, high school enrollment in Escalante has dropped to less than 50: a decline of more than 66%. If this decline had occurred to the juveniles of any other species (mammal, bird, fish or plant) the species would have been declared endangered. Not so for the juveniles of Escalante High School. The consequences are not limited to just one town. Led by the declines in Escalante High School, enrollment has dropped across the Garfield County School District. Currently the official enrollment in Garfield County schools and less than it was in 1890, 130 years ago. Such is the case when a President evaluates a decision under the cloak of darkness as with the Clinton monument designation. Numerous other negative impacts have also resulted from the Clinton designations. These include but are not be limited to:

a) Elimination of mineral resource development, especially coal. We understand the largest untapped coal resource in North America lies within the Clinton monument boundaries and outside of the Trump boundaries. We are not so naive as to be blind to the war on fossil fuels and the desire to move to energy sources that can be more easily renewed. However, only a very

small percentage of the nation's power is currently generated by renewable sources; and it will take years and years until fossil fuels are replaced in any significant fashion. Coal resources in Kane and Garfield Counties can be easily developed and used without significant environmental impact. Use and availability of these resources as the nation moves towards energy independence is an important bridge that will concurrently assist the economic vitality and community stability for Kane and Garfield Counties. The Trump adjustments do not guarantee those results, but they at least allow the opportunity for them to occur – after appropriate environmental review. This is much more favorable than the Clinton designation that doomed the country to stand idly by and ignore energy independence in favor of relying on other countries, often our enemies.

b) Of all people/organizations, those who should be most offended by the Clinton designation is Congress itself. The Clinton designation was nothing more than an effort to create wilderness where it did not exist and without congressional action. The Wilderness Act of 1964 was very clear in placing wilderness designation in the hands of Congress. Yet President Clinton, in his clandestine consideration and deceitful designation, created a plan whereby more than 1,000,000 acres were managed as wilderness without any review, without congressional action and without consideration of the communities and governments impacted thereby. Throughout President Trump's discussion of his decision to modify the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of local involvement and public comment. It seems highly provocative that the Natural Resource Committee now holds a hearing mischaracterized as lack of review when the adjustment was conducted in the light of public review which never occurred in Clinton's original designation that sidestepped and undermined Congressional authority to designate wilderness.

Fourth- The Clinton monument conspired to keep people out of the monument. Every effort was made in the planning process to prohibit the American public from visiting GSENM. Three of many examples include:

a) Hole in the Rock Road. The Hole in the Rock Road is a County Road and the most significantly used non-state Highway within GSENM boundaries. The original route was developed by pioneers in the late 1800s and has been formally managed and maintained by Garfield County since the initial decades of the 20th century. For approximately one century Garfield County has actively maintained the Hole in the Rock Road with the best equipment of the day. Since Clinton's designation traffic has increased on Hole in the Rock Road by 20 fold - a 2000% increase! Unfortunately, the pre-decisional and self-serving development of the Clinton monument management plan prohibited any improvements to Hole in the Rock Road. Could you imagine any facility with which you are familiar (a cafeteria, a store, a road, a school, etc.) that increases its use by 20 fold and yet prohibits any improvements whatsoever. It is clear from management of the Hole in the Rock Road and from similar actions on the entire transportation network – all of which are under the jurisdiction, management and maintenance control of the state and local governments - approved in Clinton's monument that visitors are not welcome. The Clinton management plan encouraged the public to stay away, and the GSENM was to be reserved as a private playground for only the most-hearty of Clinton's supporters.

b) Clinton's monument prohibits even the most basic visitor services and ignores health and personal safety concerns. Clinton monument deficiencies are most easily observed at the Dry Fork trailhead near the Garfield/Kane County line adjacent to Hole in the Rock Road. The Dry Fork slot canyons receive the second most visitation in Clinton's monument. More than 20,000 visitors a year visit the area to experience a beginning level slot canyon hike. No restrooms are provided at the parking area. Consequently, the first thing one notices upon exiting his/her vehicle is a vast array of toilet paper and fecal material, along with the odor associated with thousands of people collectively defecating and urinating at the site. The Clinton monument refuses to provide facilities for human sanitation. Recreation monitoring conducted by Northern Arizona University and more recently by Penn State University has identified exposed human waste at the Dry Fork trailhead as the number one health problem in the Clinton monument. It is also our understanding that monitors ceased counting concentrated human waste piles when they had only partially covered the area but when the number far exceeded 100.

If the deplorable sanitary conditions associated with human waste were not enough, Clinton's monument plan is even more egregious when considering human life. The 1996 monument prohibits the most basic signing to direct visitors to and from the Dry Fork slot canyons. In the spring of 2018, an individual died from heat exhaustion after leaving the Dry Fork slot canyons and becoming unable to locate his way back to the parking lot. A simple \$10 sign could have prevented the loss of life. Reports indicate that in the 20 years the Clinton monument has been in existence more than 50 individuals have lost their lives, largely due to lack of appropriate, low cost signing. Most of the deficiencies with the Clinton monument can be attributed to overly restrictive regulations which prohibited reasonable visitation management.

Under the Trump monument boundaries many of the highest use areas are removed from monument designation, consistent with the intense recreational use, lack of distinct monument objects, and need for management which focuses on visitor services, health, safety and welfare. Surely every reasonable person would have to agree that even if only one life is saved because of Trumps boundary modifications, it was a good decision - especially for the individuals and family members of those who might be lost.

c) Monument staff, implementing the Clinton monument plan, damage objects and resources they are charged to protect. In particular, staff direct visitors to concentrate uses where the staff prefers and misleads visitors into believing that sites desirable for visitation are unavailable to the public. The classic example of this Clinton Monument flaw is an area known as the Cosmic Ashtray. The Cosmic Ashtray is located in Garfield County near Harris Wash and is most easily accessed by a County road – a fully developed highway used to access a pre FLPMA well site. The road was constructed to handle two lanes of heavy trucks passing one another and has a constructed surface approximately 1 foot thick. The road passes within 1/2 mile of scenic geologic feature called the Cosmic Ashtray. Clinton's monument failed to recognize the road; and staff interpretation of the 1996 monument plan is use of the road is a violation of Clinton's designation. Consequently, staff direct visitors desiring to see the Cosmic Ashtray to use the Spencer Flat Road located approximately 8 1/2 miles north of the site. There is no trail to negotiate the 8 1/2 miles from the Spencer Flat Road to the Cosmic Ashtray, and visitors are required to travel cross country over the difficult canyon terrain. The Internet indicates that approximately 80% of the individuals that attempt the excursion never make it to the Cosmic

Ashtray and return to their vehicles either unfulfilled - or they become lost or disoriented along the way.

Trump's modifications would recognize Garfield County's road and permit easier access to the Cosmic Ashtray. Not only would visitors be safer and visitation be more convenient, pressure on sites such as Dry Fork would be reduced, and impacts to those higher use sites would be eased. Additionally, nothing would prohibit those desiring a more rugged experience from continuing to use the Spencer Flat route. Thus visitation would be improved for all levels of visitors.

d) The Clinton monument imposed visitation limits that were unreasonable and unrealistic. One does not have to look far to see how the input of and impacts on local residents were ignored in Clinton's planning efforts. Two of innumerable examples should suffice: Example 1. Certain staff members in Garfield County are prohibited from visiting 65% of the monument with their children and their children's spouses because they would exceed the allowable group size limit. Example 2. A neighboring Wayne County Commissioner is prohibited from having a picnic with his children and grandchildren on 94% of the Clinton monument because they exceed the allowable group limits. In both cases, the County employee and the neighboring Commissioner are prohibited from roasting a marshmallow on the remaining 6% of the monument unless they bring their own wood - in spite of dead and down wood being readily available and rotting on the land.

To make matters worse, at their own volition and in conflict with the monument management plan, monument staff under the Clinton monument have taken it upon themselves to interpret rules and restrict visitation even further. Employees arbitrarily impose additional restrictions requiring that any group accompanied by an animal (a dog, cat, horseback, etc.) be assessed for each heartbeat. Known as the heartbeat rule, group sizes have been limited further. Only after President Trump's welcomed adjustment, and after 20 years of complaints, monument management finally listening to local governments and local citizens and instructed staff to discontinue application of the heartbeat rule. However, although directed to the contrary, some monument staff are noncompliant and continue to implement the heartbeat rule without proper authorization.

It is self-evident the Trump monument greatly reduces these conflicts and opens the monument to a much greater segment of the American public. Particularly interesting is the Trump modifications are equally beneficial for visitors unfamiliar with the monument as they are for the local public. Surely a process that provides greater opportunities for the American public, accommodates greater visitation and takes greater responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its visitors cannot be described as *Forgotten Voices*, *Inadequate Review* or *Improper Alteration*.

Fifth- Clinton monument law enforcement has been nothing short of incompetent and uncooperative. For example, prior to the adjustments, federal law enforcement officials became aware of two individuals that were illegally collecting sandstone and iron oxide rocks known as Moqui Marbles. Before they even encountered the perpetrators, BLM directed federal law enforcement not to arrest the individuals. When these federal officers arrived on the scene and questioned the men, federal law enforcement found in the men's vehicles 1100 pounds of

illegally obtained Moqui Marbles, methamphetamines, drug paraphernalia, and a box of stolen jewelry from burglaries in Washington County. The officers also discovered that one man had eight pages of criminal history, the second man had 23 pages of criminal history, and both men were on probation. But rather than contacting local law enforcement, the federal officers turned the individuals loose. In the ensuing eight months the two men committed no less than 11 burglaries in Kane County before being apprehended by the Kane County Sheriff's Department. Shortly thereafter, the Kane County Sheriff's Department was contacted by BLM and informed that BLM intended to arrest the men, to which the sheriff responded that he already had the individuals in custody.

The Trump monument adjustments have already resulted in a much more cooperative relationship between BLM law enforcement and the County Sheriff's offices. Efforts are moving forward to provide training for federal officers and to work in cooperation with the local Sheriff departments. Cooperative agreements are being developed, and it is generally felt that improved law enforcement capabilities are being realized.

Many other examples could be cited. But again, no well-informed, reasonable individual would characterize the results of the monument boundary changes as *Forgotten Voices*, *Inadequate Review* or *Improper Alteration*. From a local government and law enforcement point of view, it can only be described as *voices heard, proper review and improvements & progress*.

Sixth- Inappropriate/illegal associations with selfish interest groups. Throughout the history of the Clinton monument BLM has maintained questionable associations with groups that emphasized special and selfish interests rather than good of the American public. The Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners is a primary example. This private group has used government facilities, federal vehicles, government equipment and has received what Garfield County asserts are illegal, under the table payments and end of fiscal year funding from BLM with no required deliverables. In a complete contradiction of the term "Partners," the organization is now suing the federal government regarding the Trump adjustments. Garfield County asserts the motivation for this group's lawsuit is that involvement of state and local governments in the planning, implementation and activities on the monument threatens their illegal funding sources and their unauthorized influence. Since the Trump designation, this group no longer has offices in federal facilities, no longer uses federal vehicles; and the under the table funding source has dried up. Inasmuch as this is an oversight hearing, we specifically request that a detailed audit of the activities and funding associated with the Grand Staircase Escalante Partners be initiated.

Seventh – The Antiquities Act is Antiquated. The Antiquities Act was codified in 1906 when any individual who was physically able could go onto the public lands and take home anything he/she could carry. There were no limits on the scientific, cultural and paleontological resources that one could obtain from the federal lands. The Act was a simple one-page solution with only 4 sections: 1) Individuals could no longer acquire whatever resource they wanted; 2) The president could designate monuments to protect sensitive objects, as long as the designation was limited to the smallest area necessary; 3) Bonafide museums and universities could obtain permission to acquire protected objects of scientific interest; and 4) Department Secretaries were directed to make rules regarding the acquisition of objects.

Since 1906 Congress has passed a plethora of legislation regulating the acquisition and possession of cultural, historic, paleontological, and scientific objects. The NEPA planning process also assures protection of valuable objects. The host of federal statutes are complimented by State and local laws and ordinances that provide additional protection for sensitive objects on federal lands. These combined legislative protections that have been developed in the last 115 years would lead any reasonable individual to conclude that protection of sensitive objects has improved many fold and that risk of loss is greatly reduced. And it is only logical that the most valuable resources were identified and protected during those 115 years. It follows that monument acreage should be getting smaller over the course of time rather than larger.

Originally and appropriately, monuments were created from the inside out. Discreet objects were identified, a boundary depicting the smallest area needed for protection was established, and the monument was designated. Perhaps the first of its kind, the Clinton Grand Staircase-Escalante designation abandoned reason and established a monument from the outside in. In other words, the largest area possible was identified, a list of potential objects without discrete limits was itemized and without any public knowledge or review the monument was designated. It was a clear and obvious abuse of Presidential power, and – although possibly legal – did not represent the interests of the American public or the land, as evidenced by 20 years of neglect and abuse in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Not so with the Trump boundary adjustments. In a period of time extending almost a year the Secretary of the Interior, at the open and public direction of the President, carefully examined potential objects. His review had the added benefit of resource specialists that were on the ground and had been inventorying objects for more than 20 years. Scientific institutions that had been studying those objects for two decades weighed in. Meetings were held; comments were received; and the interested public had its collective voice heard. Some may have wanted a bigger area. We in Garfield County, who understand the land best and get to live with the consequences, wanted significantly less. Regardless of an individual's personal desires, no one can argue that the Clinton process was more open and under greater scrutiny than the Trump process. No one can argue the public was less involved in 2017 than they were in 1996. No reasonable person can say with the added contention our nation is presently experiencing there was less care taken in the adjustment than there was in the original designation. No one can say with the added social media in 2018 there was less advanced public notice regarding the Trump designation.

Conclusion - For one who has lived and breathed this single issue every day for more than 20 years, for one of three who is constitutionally charged with protecting the health, safety, welfare, custom, culture, and heritage of the residents and visitors to Garfield County's portion of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, for one who is charged under federal legislation to create productive harmony between man and his environment, and for one who understands the land and is more intimately involved in its condition and care on a daily basis than possibly anyone else in this room, I emphatically and unequivocally declare and testify: The American people, the American lands and the American institution are far better off under the Trump Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument designation that we were under President Clinton's action.

We live in a contentious, litigious society where those who do not get their way magnify complaints in an effort to undercut the governmental process. Such is the case with opponents to

President Trump's monument boundary adjustments. Independent of any other position, one thing is undeniable. More light, more public involvement, more scrutiny, and greater input from the American public and its duly elected officials has been realized by President Trump's actions than was ever desired or considered by President Clinton in 1996. There is no reasonable person that can say or think that President Clinton's clandestine consideration and deceitful designation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in any way compares with the public scrutiny and daylight shed on President Trump's adjustments to its boundaries. Voices were heard; review was detailed and adequate; President Trump's alteration was not only proper but was justified and in the best interest of the American public.

I so testify, pledging my sacred honor, so help me God.

I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have. I can be reached at (435) 616-2718 or by email at leland.pollock@garfield.utah.gov.

Thank you again.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leland F. Pollock", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Leland F. Pollock
Chair, Garfield County Commission

Monument Effects

President Clinton's monument designation in 1996 started a suffocation of Garfield County. While no single industry felt an instant fatal blow, the effect of the monument's restrictions cumulatively was death by a thousand cuts.

1. **Socioeconomic Deficiencies.** Prior to 1996 Garfield County was a growing economy and population. For approximately 120 years multiple-use land-based industries that sustainably and reasonably used public lands surrounding Escalante supported the families of that community. With severe restrictions on that land resulting from Clinton's designation, businesses started closing and young families were forced to move to metropolitan areas to find employment. That exodus caused a self-perpetuating effect in all industries that now had a dwindling customer base. This economic shrinking has continued for more than 2 decades.

The jobs that were promised were never realized, as the Clinton Monument has never been managed for visitation and access, but rather for limited recreation and more like a conservation area. The few jobs that outfitting and recreation guiding did bring are seasonal and low wage; more suited for college students in the summer than for a living wage to support a family year-round. Nationally, 10.5% of the economy is made up from service industries. In Garfield County tourism and service industries (and it is usually the low end jobs from those industries) comprise approximately 44% of the local economy. Attached is a chart showing the seasonality of Garfield County employment compared to two nearby communities and the State of Utah. All other effects stem from a struggling local economy hobbled by over- burdensome land restrictions.

Please also note, some will attempt to mislead you into believing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has been a great economic boon to Garfield County. They often cite an economic study produced by *Headwaters Economics*. That study draws its data from communities that are hundreds of times larger than Garfield County, such as the Phoenix metropolitan area, and the area designated for monuments is 5% to 10% of that designated for Garfield County. The study also includes the largest community in Southern Utah in the analysis, even though it is two counties (over 100 miles) away and on the other side of Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon National Park.

2. **Loss of School Kids and Families.** Since creation of GSENM in 1996 enrollment in the 7th through 12th grades of Escalante High School has dropped from over 150 students to less than 50 today. That is a loss of more than 66%. We would not permit the loss of two thirds of the juveniles in any species on this planet. But yet, we manage our public lands that completely surround the communities in Garfield County in a manner that results in that very same loss. Only in this instance, we're talking about people, families and human lives. Even when classes are available, the quality of education with on a few students per class, without sufficient student/social interaction, suffers compared to an energetic class of 15-20 students discussing and sharing diverse viewpoints. The situation became so unbearable that in 2016 the County was forced to issue an emergency declaration.

3. **Increase Burdens on Local Governments.** Garfield County has tremendous scenery. Creation

of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument brought attention to that scenery and required increased local government services in the form of road maintenance, law enforcement, search and rescue, and other services. For example: The Hole in the Rock Road, a route originally traveled by pioneers in 1879, has increased approximately 2000% since 1996. However, the Monument Management Plan, written and controlled by agency heads without accepting local input, prohibits improvements to the road. That means Garfield County cannot install culverts or drainage improvements to accommodate floods which leads to poor road quality and increased automobile incidents not equipped to handle the rough roads. The BLM and Park service then repeatedly call our road crews out in the middle of the night - risking our lives - to rescue trapped and stranded visitors. Here again, local elected officials have the information and experience to correctly manage problems, and agency heads in Washington DC are unfamiliar with the territory.

Similarly, utility corridors, well established prior to the Monument designation, have been severely restricted by poor management without local input. Garfield and Kane Counties have been limited in expanding fiber optic connectivity for internet and cell towers because of management restrictions within already prescribed utility corridors. Beside the economic potential that connectivity would provide, the lack of adequate cell reception has created a safety issue that could often be prevented by stranded visitors being able to call for help or use mobile based navigation.

That same utility corridor restriction caused an emergency in the town of Henrieville which was not permitted to access its water lines for repair in the Monument and suffered a catastrophic collapse of its entire water system. Tens of thousands of gallons of water for drinking only was hauled to the city at great expense over a week until the right to access the lines was allowed by Monument management.

4. **Lack of Adequate Signing.** The same Monument Management Plan prohibits guidance signing in approximately 94% of GSENM. People on even the most popular hikes are frequently lost; and in July of this year we had another death on the trail to the 2nd most popular hike in the Monument because the hiker could not find the trail back to his car. Most of the consequences of poor management are preventable with proper simple signage. However, the expense for poor management is passed on to Garfield County when called for search and rescue, medical, and law enforcement services.

5. **Loss of Artifacts and Objects of Antiquity.** One of the great ironies of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument is collection of artifacts and souvenirs. The Monument Management Plan prohibits any rock or artifact removal, including for the Monument itself for use in display purposes in the visitor center because the visitor center is located in Canonville Town, outside monument boundaries. However the Management Plan allows universities and museums to come to Garfield County, extract and raid our world-class archaeological and paleontological artifacts and take them out of the County with no remuneration and without any local hope of their return. If the landscapes are unique to the area, and worthy of visitors coming to experience them here, the unique paleontological and archeological resources are equally impressive and researchers should come to Garfield County to experience them. Federal agencies have long promised, in accordance with scientific protections of the Antiquities Act, to make the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument a science monument with a science research center and

on-site university classes, but for 21 years those promises have never been fulfilled.

6. **Closing the Monument to Visitors.** A 1.9 million acre Monument should be large enough to accommodate many visitors. However, the Management Plan, written without genuine local input, severely restricts visitation in almost all parts of GSENM. In two thirds of the Monument many small groups of friends or family cannot legally visit together because they will be over the 12 person limit. In 94% of the monument family reunions or scout camp-outs are illegal because of the 25 person limit. In the front country designation it is a violation to collect dead & down firewood, so families cannot roast marshmallows or hot dogs unless they bring their own firewood. The monument management plan is written to keep people out rather than accommodate reasonable visitation and allow the public to enjoy the area in a reasonable manner. These explicit rules also restrict historic religious and cultural heritage events, which were supposed to be grandfathered into the monument plan, but the Harvey rule precluded that use.

Much of that closing to visitation is implicit. A purposeful lack of most infrastructure discourages the vast majority of Americans from enjoyment of these public lands. The second most popular destination, the Peekaboo and Spooky trails, lack any restroom facilities, and the trailhead and parking area is covered in trash and human waste by more than 20,000 annual visitors leaving a health hazard and stench. Another popular religious and cultural attraction, Dance Hall Rock, finally received a restroom, the only restroom in over 40 miles of popular attractions, only after 19 years of persistent requests.

7. **Wildlife Habitat Recovery and Livestock Grazing.** The Monument has historically been a coveted hunting ground for mule deer and other species. Wildlife benefited from greatly from livestock producers who maintained vegetative quality and water sources for livestock and wildlife alike. While livestock grazing was guaranteed by the 1996 designation, Monument management decisions to not allow habitat recovery projects or for equipment use for water source maintenance that naturally erode over time, has severely limited livestock producers and their livelihood. Monument management repeatedly cite that few livestock numbers have been permanently reduced, but in reality over a third of the guaranteed AUMs have been “permanently suspended” due to dwindling grazing conditions on the ground. Monument management does not need to cut AUMs from livestock grazing, the ranchers will be forced to do it themselves because there will not be anything on the ground for their livestock, or the wildlife, to eat.

The effect of that restriction has also impacted wildlife, including critical mule deer migratory corridors. This wildlife decline has impacted the local population as well as sportsmen across the intermountain region who have historically relied on southern Utah as a premier hunting destination. Without the habitat recovery projects carried out on public lands across the West, all animals suffer.