

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

August 22, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke:

In the Book of Genesis, God entrusts the wellbeing of creation to humanity. Made in God's image, we are called to be keepers of what God has made and ensure the riches of creation are passed to future generations.

As Montana religious leaders, we are grateful to live among some of the most majestic examples of the Lord's work: from Yellowstone, to the Crown of the Continent, to the Missouri River Breaks. Families transmit a profound love for our nation's public lands and waters from generation to generation through sports such as hunting, fishing and hiking, as well as study of the natural world. We enjoy showing hospitality to tourists who travel from all over our country and the world to enjoy the gifts of God's creation. Many Montanans also travel our country to explore and enjoy all of our nation's public lands. Because of our deep love of God's creation, it is part of our Montana culture to champion the value of stewardship.

As the Secretary of the Interior, you are among the chief stewards of God's creation. You hold tremendous responsibility for the wellbeing of our public lands, waters, and biodiversity. We pray for you, as you listen for God's guidance as a primary steward of our nation's natural, cultural, and spiritual heritage.

One of the best ways our nation has lived out God's call to stewardship is through our national monuments, which encompass areas of scientific, cultural, and historical interest to be conserved for future generations. National monuments have been thoughtfully crafted by US presidents of both parties since the time of President Teddy Roosevelt, and each have left a powerful stewardship legacy.

Now, you have an opportunity to do the same – to build and leave behind a stewardship legacy. Yet, one of the first things President Trump has asked you to do is review and assess whether and how to un-do the stewardship legacies of his predecessors.

We are deeply disappointed by news that you are seriously considering closing-off certain national monuments. These special parts of God's creation encompassed in our national monuments belong to all of us- taking these public lands and waters away would be devastating.

In the final hours of your review, we remind you these recommendations lie in your hands. You are free to recommend that all national monuments be left as they are, and indeed you should do so.

Respectfully,

Rev. Pattiann Bennett
Rector, St. Michael & All Angels' Episcopal Church
Eureka, MT

Mr. Norman Bishop
Retired Park Ranger
Bozeman, MT

The Rev. Connie Campbell-Pearson
Clergy, St. James Episcopal Church
Bozeman, MT

Rev. Daniel Disch
Pastor, Atonement Lutheran Church
Missoula, MT

Nicole Dunn
Director, Open Way Mindfulness Center
Montana

Rev. Chris Flohr
Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Missoula, MT

Greg Grallo
Chaplain, Open Way Sangha/UUFM
Montana

The Rev. David Gunderson
Retired Episcopal Priest
Livingston, MT

Rev. Peter Guthneck
Priest, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
Box Elder, MT

Dr. John Hart
Professor of Christian Ethics, Boston University School of Theology
Helena, MT

The Rev. Gary W. Hawk
Retired Minister; Faith and Climate Action
Missoula, MT

Abby Huseh
Coordinator, Faith and Climate Action Montana
Missoula, MT

The Rev. Roxanne Klingensmith
Clergy, St. James Episcopal Church
Bozeman, MT

Rev. Jayson Nicholson
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Laurel, MT

Rev. John Lund
Emmaus Campus Ministry, University of Montana
Missoula, MT

Rev. Jody McDevitt
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
Bozeman, MT

Amanda Nelson
Youth and Family Coordinator, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Missoula, MT

Sandra Simons,
Bozeman Dharma Center/Holy Rosary
Bozeman, MT

The Rev. Canon Clark Spencer
Priest, Episcopal Diocese of Montana
Bozeman, MT

Rev. Dr. Daniel Spencer
Professor, University of Montana
Missoula, MT

Dr. Jay Smith
Administrator, Yellowstone Theological Institute
Bozeman, MT

Rabbi Ed Stafman
Beth Shalom
Bozeman, MT

Rev. Dr. Marc Stewart
Conference Minister, Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ
Billings, MT

Mary Wagner
Administrator, Pilgrim Congregational Church
Bozeman, MT

Rev. Valerie Webster
Episcopal Priest and Hospital Chaplain; Immediate Past President of the Montana Association of
Christians
Bozeman, MT

Sr. Clarann Weinert, SC, PhD, RN, FAA
Professor, College of Nursing, Montana State University
Bozeman, MT

The Rev. Terri Ann Grotzinger
Rector, Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Missoula, MT