The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  

November 30, 2017  

Dear President Trump:  

We are faith leaders of many traditions, yet we all share a profound bond through the spiritual, cultural, and natural heritage conserved through our U.S. public lands and waters. This heritage needs our collective care, so it may be passed on as a sacred inheritance for future generations.  

We write to you with deep concern for this shared heritage. Secretary Zinke has made national monument recommendations that would inflict the most-significant-ever loss of conservation protections for public lands. This loss of protections could potentially result in irreversible harm to sacred sites, petroglyphs, ancient cliff dwellings, grave sites, threatened and endangered wildlife, geological wonders, and delicate watersheds.  

We pray you will reject any proposals to diminish the size and protections for any national monuments, including Bears Ears, Cascade-Siskiyou, Gold Butte, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Katahdin Woods and Waters, Northeast Canyons and Seamounts, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Pacific Remote Islands, Rio Grande Del Norte, and Rose Atoll National Monuments.  

Many of us experience a strong connection to divine presence through these special places. When we walk on hallowed grounds, we feel wonder and awe at the majestic natural world, delight in the glorious diversity of wildlife, and marvel at the legacies of our ancestors.  

During Native American heritage month, we call special attention to the fact that every American lives in the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples. The presence of Indigenous peoples is imbued in the lands and waters around us.  

To honor both the historic and current spiritual ties of Indigenous peoples to U.S. lands and waters, it is a moral imperative to listen to the unique wisdom Indigenous peoples offer to our country. In particular, the tribal leaders in the Bears Ears Commission of Tribes, a leadership body meant to be the primary official advisors on management of the Bears Ears National Monument, has consistently called on the Trump Administration to uphold the protections for the monument. We grieve the lack of attention that has been paid by the Department of Interior to the Bears Ears Commission of Tribes, and we call on you to truly listen to these wise leaders before moving forward with any decision about Bears Ears or any of our national monuments.  

In Hope,
ALABAMA
Rev. Pamela Payne
Priest, Episcopal Church
Fayette, AL

ARIZONA
Rev. Richard Landry
Chaplain, Catholic Community Services
Tucson, AZ
Dr. Sally Rings
Liturgist, Council member, Independent Progressive Christian
Phoenix, AZ

ARKANSAS
Father Fred Ball
Minister, Franciscans of Reconciliation
Little Rock, AR

CALIFORNIA
Rev. Joseph P. Shore-Goss
Clergy, United Church of Christ
Petaluma
Petaluma, CA
Rev. Karin Ellis
Pastor, United Methodist Church
Tustin, CA
Rev. Mary P. Foran
Director, Unitarian Universalist Church
Oakland, CA
The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham
Priest, Grace Cathedral
San Francisco, CA
Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman
Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church, UCC
Palo Alto, CA
Rev. James Ross
Pastor, First Congregational Church, UCC
Ripon, CA
Brother Mark Schroeder, O.F.M.
Franciscans for Justice
Sacramento, CA
Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Cohen
Rabbi, American Jewish University
Los Angeles, CA
Rev. Dr. Paula Pociecha
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Fort Bragg, CA
Dr. Martha M Teeter
Member, Church and Society Ministry
Davis, CA

COLORADO
Fr. Michael J. Nicosia
Pastor and Regional Vicar, Pax Christi Ecumenical Catholic Communion Church / Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Denver, Colorado
Rev. Jann Halloran
Minister, Prairie Unitarian Universalist Church
Parker, CO
Rev. Susan Emerson Artt
Regional Judicatory Executive, Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC
Denver, CO
Rev. Peter Sawtell
Director, Eco-Justice Ministries
Denver, CO
Rev. Marnie Leinberger
Pastor, Milagro Christian Church
Pueblo, CO
Rev. Karen Winkel
Founding Pastor, Community Spirit UCC
Montrose, CO
Rabbi Mark Asher Goodman
Rabbi, Har Mishpacha
Steamboat Springs, CO

CONNECTICUT
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A.M.E. Zion Church
Farmington, CT
Rev. Lynne A. Grifo
Pastor, Episcopal Church
New Haven, CT
Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager
Pastor, First Church of Christ Congregational
East Haddam, CT
Dr. Jane Ellingwood
Minister, United Church of Christ
Bethel, CT
Rev. Carol S. Rawls  
Minister, First Church of Christ Congregational, UCC  
Redding, CT

Rev. Kathleen Reynolds  
Lead Pastor, United Methodist Church of Litchfield, Litchfield  
Co Opiate Task Force  
Litchfield, CT

Rabbi Nelly Altenburger  
Congregation B'nai Israel  
Danbury, CT

DELAWARE  
Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton  
Priest, Episcopal Church  
Long Neck, DE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Sister Marie Lucey, OSF  
Associate Director, Franciscan Action Network  
Washington, DC

Shantha Ready Alonso  
Executive Director, Creation Justice Ministries  
Washington, DC

FLORIDA  
Rev. Thomas Coover  
Bishop, Ecumenical Catholic Church USA  
Tampa, FL

Dr. Kimberly de Vries  
Minister, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church  
Gainesville, FL

Rev. Linda Reilly  
Clergy, United Church of Christ  
DelRay Beach, FL

Ms. Sarah Jane Moore  
Elder, First Presbyterian Church of Vero Beach  
Vero Beach, FL

Rev. Dr. Lloyd A. Hunter  
Pastor, United Church of Christ  
San Antonio, FL

Rev. Robert Francis Murphy  
Minister, Unitarian Universalist  
Tarpon Springs, FL

GEORGIA  
Sister Elizabeth Sully OP  
Sinsinawa Dominican  
Atlanta, GA

Rev. Dr. Katy Hinman  
Pastor, College Park First United Methodist Church  
College Park, GA

HAWAII  
Rev. Kekapa'ahu ulaokapo'ohiwioka mehameha Lee  
Native Hawaiian Pastor, United Church of Christ  
Honolulu, HI

Rev. Joseph Medlin  
Pastor, Hokuloa Church, UCC  
Puako, HI

Rev. Eric S. Anderson  
Pastor, Church of the Holy Cross UCC  
Hilo, HI

INDIANA  
Rev. Ruth E. Phillips  
Clergy, Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC  
Fort Wayne, IN

Rev. Rebecca Barnes  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Jeffersonville, IN

Rev. Paul Hartig  
Pastor, First Christian Church of Beech Grove  
Beech Grove, IN

Rev. Laureen Hartig  
Pastor, Hobbs Christian Church  
Hobbs, IN

SISTER KATHLEEN YEADON, OSB  
Roman Catholic Sister  
Beech Grove, IN

ILLINOIS  
Rev. Jonathan A. Knight  
Minister, The Union Church of Hinsdale  
Downers Grove, IL

Rev. Jonathan Kight  
Minister, United Church of Christ  
Downers Grove, IL

Rev. Jim Roberts  
Pastor, Lutheran Church  
Rockford, IL

Rev. Amy E. Wharton  
Minister, Disciples of Christ  
Robinson, IL
Rev. Jonathan Hancock  
Associate Pastor for Congregational Care, First Presbyterian Church of Glen Ellyn  
Glen Ellyn, IL

Rev. Daryl Emowrey  
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Angola, IL

IOWA  
Rev. Elizabeth Colton  
Pastor, St. Paul Congregational United Church of Christ  
Oskaloosa, IA

Rev. Dr. Gary L Chapman  
Minister, United Church of Christ  
Burlington, Iowa

LOUISIANA  
Rev. Constance McIntosh  
Minister, Renegade Gospel Worshiping Community, PCUSA  
Welsh, LA

Rev. Dr. Gary R. Vencill  
Clergy, Reversing Falls Sanctuary  
Prospect, ME

MARYLAND  
The Rev. Dr. Sue Lowcock Harris  
Co-Pastor, The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County  
Columbia, MD

Sister Ann Scholz, SSND  
Associate Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Silver Springs, MD

Rev. Alex Vishio  
Minister, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ  
Catonsville, MD

Sister Mary Beth Hamm  
Sisters of St. Joseph  
Reisterstown, MD

Dr. Barbara Hope  
Pastoral Counselor, Roman Catholic  
Ellicott City, MD

Elder Carol Appleby  
Presbyterian Church  
Towson, MD

Rabbi Alana Suskin  
Rockville, MD

MASSACHUSETTS  
Rev. Dr. Sharon A. Wozencraft  
Minister, National Association of Congregational Christian Churches  
Medway, MA

Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas  
Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts & Mass. Conference, United Church of Christ  
Springfield, MA

Rev. Jeffrey Conlon  
Pastor, Faith United Parish  
Fitchburg, MA

Rev. Tiffany Nicely Holleck  
St. Peter’s Lutheran Church of Cape Cod  
Harwich, MA

Rev. Peter-Michael Preble  
Minister, Bethany Congregational Church, UCC  
Quincy, MA

Rev. Ernie Farrar  
Pastor, United Methodist Lunenburg, MA

Rev. Rosa M. Buffone  
Pastor, Holy Spirit Catholic Community  
Newton, MA

Rev. Jill A. Mills  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Ann Arbor, MI

Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray  
Pastor, St. John’s United Church of Christ  
Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Peggy Malnati  
Church of Tzaddi  
Farmington Hills, MI
Rev. Miriam Bush
Minister, Center for Spirituality Action and Transformation
Muskegon, MI

Mr. Jon Krueger
Musician, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Jackson, MI

MINNESOTA
Rev. Donna J. Olsen
Pastor, Hope 4 All UHM
Minneapolis, MN

Rev. Elette Gamble
Pastor & Chaplain, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Hopkins, MN

Rev. Dr. Deborah Ann Taylor
Pastor, Lutheran
Minneapolis, MN

Rev. Barbara Martin
Pastor, Union Congregational United Church of Christ
St. Louis Park, MN

Rev. Jan Bodin
Pastor, Congregational Church of Faribault, UCC
Faribault, MN

Ms. Pamela Y. Cook
Pastor, Sojourner Truth Community
New Brighton, MN

Rev. Lynn C. Borgeson
Pastor, Richfield United Methodist Church
Bloomington, MN

Ms. Ann Antus
First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ
Falcon Heights, MN

Rev. Krehl D. Stringer
Clergy, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bemidji, MN

Rev. Denise Fossen
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Hendricks, MN

Pastor Stuart Knappmiller
UCC
Saint Paul, MN

Rev. Dan Adolphson
Associate Pastor, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Minneapolis, MN

Ms. Deb Murphy
Director, First Christian Church (DOC) Mpls
Minneapolis, MN

MISSOURI
Ms. Jennifer Reyes Lay
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
St. Louis, MO

Rev. Amy L. Fallon
Vicar, Trinity Episcopal Church
Kirksville, MO

Rev. Jeffery Hammonds
Pastor, United Church of Christ
Poplar Bluff, MO

Ms. Donna Nachesfski
Sacristan, St. Stanislaus Catholic Church
St. Louis, MO

MONTANA
Bishop Jessica Crist
Montana Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Great Falls, MT

Rev. Susan Barnes
Pastor, Presbyterian Church USA
Billings, MT

NEBRASKA
Rev. Michael A. Davis
Clergy, Great Plains Conference United Methodist Church
Lincoln, NE

NEVADA
The Rt. Rev. Dan Edwards
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Nevada
Las Vegas, NV

D. Edward Chaney
Pastor, Second Baptist Church
Las Vegas, NV

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Rev. Maren Tirabassi
Clergy, United Church of Christ
Portsmouth, NH

NEW JERSEY
Rev. Dr. Charles McCollough
Clergy, United Church of Christ
Hopewell, NJ
Rev. Dr. Deborah Hunsinger  
Professor, Princeton  
Theological Seminary  
Princeton, NJ

Rev. Dr. Harry W. Eberts III  
Pastor, First Presbyterian  
Church of Santa Fe  
Santa Fe, NM

Sister Margaret Egan, SC  
Professor, College of Mount  
Saint Vincent  
Bronx, NY

Lori Evans  
Ruling Elder, Synod of the northeast  
Justice and Peace Coordinator, Synod of the northeast  
Lakewood, NJ

Rev. Virginia Bairby  
Pastor, First Presbyterian  
Church of Taos, PCUSA  
Taos, NM

Rev. Patricia J. Raube  
Pastor, Presbyterian Church USA  
Binghamton, NY

Rev. Dr. Emily B. Hall  
Clergy, United Methodist Church  
Oak Ridge, NJ

Rev. James D. Brown  
Minister, Presbyterian Church USA  
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Karen Brammer  
Minister, Fourth Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Westchester County  
Mohegan Lake, NY

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Rev. Chan Osborn de Anaya  
Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Church of Navajoland  
Farmington, NM

Pastor James Therrien  
Pastor, Lybrook Community Ministries  
Counselor, NM

Rev. William Larry David  
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church  
Farmington, NM

Mr. Jerry Rivers  
Church of Christ/North American Climate, Conservation and Environment  
Roosevelt, NY

Rev. Pamela Shepherd  
Minister, Taos UCC  
Taos, NM

Rev. Talitha Arnold  
United Church of Santa Fe  
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Danielle Miller  
Reverend, Advent Lutheran Church  
New York, NY

Rabbi Nahum Ward Lev  
Temple Beth Shalom  
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Mark Koenig  
Clergy, Presbyterian Church USA  
New York, NY

Rev. Martha E. Vink  
Sr. Pastor, NOW United Methodist Cooperative Parish  
Carmel, NY

Rev. Andrew Black  
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church  
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Dr. Lori Knight  
Whitehouse  
Pastor, New Hempstead Presbyterian Church  
New City, NY

Rev. Mark Koenig  
Pastor, Presbyterian Church USA  
New York, NY

Rev. Hope Harle-Mould  
Preacher, Pilgrim St. Luke’s United Church of Christ  
Buffalo, NY

Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden  
Interim Minister, United Church of Christ  
Schenectady, NY
Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert  
Retired Minister, Unitarian Universalist  
Rochester, NY

Ms. Mary D. Thorpe  
Church secretary, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Spencer, NY

NORTH CAROLINA
Rev. Linda Veltheim  
Pastor, Christ Church of the Foothills  
Hickory, NC

Rev. Dorothy Cook  
Minister, K.I.R. Ministry  
Rocky Mount, NC

Ms. Kindra Bradley  
Executive Director, Quaker House  
Fayetteville, NC

Rev. Dennis Testerman  
Moderator, Presbyterians for Earth Care  
Concord, NC

OHIO
Rev. Rebecca J. Tollefson  
Executive Director of Nonprofit Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Columbus, OH

Rev. Anne Weirich  
Pastor, Presbyterian Church USA  
New Concord, OH

Rev. Mary Robin Craig  
Pastor, Independence Presbyterian Church  
Independence, OH

Pastor Vanessa Myers-Dudley  
Pastor, First Christian Church  
Chillicothe, OH

Pastor Nicole Pickens  
Zion United Church of Christ, Fireside  
Bellevue, OH

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Catholic  
Chardon, Ohio

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Rector, Grace Episcopal Church  
Sandusky, OH

Rev. Don Norenberg  
Retired Pastor, United Church of Christ  
Oberlin, OH

Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt  
Minister, United Church of Christ  
Cleveland, Ohio

OREGON
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Minister, Ainsworth United Church of Christ  
Portland, OR

Rev. Mary Sue Evers  
Pastor, Cedar Hills United Church of Christ  
Portland, OR

Rev. Tim Graves  
Pastor, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Albany, OR

PENNSYLVANIA
Rev. Sandra L. Strauss  
Director, Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Harrisburg, PA

Rev. Dr. Kay S. Rader  
Pastor, Emmanuel United Church of Christ  
York, PA

Rev. Tonya Eza  
Pastor, Saint John Lutheran Church  
Steelton, PA

Rev. Karen Moeschberger  
Clergy, United Church of Christ  
Allentown, PA

Rev. Karen Moeschberger  
Clergy, St. John’s UCC  
Allentown, PA

OKLAHOMA
Rev. Dr. Bill Blue Eagle  
McCutchen Blue Eagle Wellbriety Ministries  
Pryor, OK

Miss Dee Manatowa  
God’s Shining Light Church  
Jennings, OK
Rev. Leslie Kearney  
Pastor, United Church of Christ  
Norristown, PA

SOUTH CAROLINA
Rev. Judith Myers  
Pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Fellowship  
Lexington, SC

Rev. Dr. Joanne C. Sizoo  
Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church  
Fort Mill, SC

Rev. Melinda W. McDonald  
Interim/Supply pastor/Retreat Leader, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Spartanburg, SC

SOUTH DAKOTA
Pastor Rosanne Dyce Anderson  
Pastor, United Church of Christ  
Watertown, SD

TENNESSEE
Rev. Joy Warren  
Minister, Cumberland Presbyterian  
Murfreesboro, TN

TEXAS
Rev. Mary Lou Dillon  
Pastor, United Memorial Christian Church  
Euless, TX

Rev. Richard L. Nelson  
Priest, Episcopcal Church/ELCA Lutheran  
Brenham, TX

Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese  
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
San Antonio, TX

Rev. Arden G. Dorn  
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Karen’s City, TX

Rev. James A. Blair  
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church  
Canyon, TX

Rev. Dr. John Frey  
Teaching Pastor, Cypress Creek Christian Church  
Spring, TX

Rev. Dr. Genny C. Rowley  
Chaplain, Alliance of Baptists  
Salt Lake City, UT

Rev. Lorrie J. Gaffney  
Minister, United Church of Christ, Salt Lake City, UT

UTAH
Kenneth Maryboy  
President, Navajo Medicine Man Association  
White Rocks, UT

Jonah Yellowman  
Spiritual Advisor, Utah Diné Bikéyah  
Monument Valley, UT

Rev. David P. Nichols  
Pastor, Mount Tabor Lutheran Church, ELCA  
Salt Lake City, UT

Rev. Dr. Patricia Mitchell  
United Church of Christ  
Heber City, UT

VERMONT
Sister Joanne LaFreniere  
Mater Christi School  
Burlington, VT

Rev. Kathleen S. Clark  
Pastor, Federated Church of  
East Arlington, UCC/UMC  
Arlington, VT

VIRGINIA
Rev. Tracy Howe Wispelwey  
United Church of Christ  
Charlottesville, VA

WASHINGTON
The Rev. Dr. Marilyn M. Cornwell  
Rector, Episcopal Church of the Ascension  
Seattle, WA

Rev. David C. Schoen  
Minister, United Church of Christ  
Freeland, WA

Rev. Marj Johnston  
Pastor, United Church of Christ  
Dayton, WA

Rev. Katherine Keough  
Pastor, Emmaus Ecumenical Catholic Community  
Olympia, WA

Mr. David Milliken  
Inner Sky Hermitage  
Spokane, WA
WEST VIRGINIA
Rev. Robin Blakeman
Parish Associate, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Huntington, WV

Wisconsin
Rev. Susan Gilbert Zencka
Pastor, Frame Memorial Presbyterian Church
Stevens Point, WI

Rev. Sandra Johnson
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
River Falls, WI

Rev. William P. Handy
Pastor, Bayfield Presbyterian Church
Bayfield, WI

Rev. Ellen Rasmussen
Pastor, United Methodist Church
Brown Deer, WI

Rev. Diane Hous
Minister, ELCA
Cumberland, WI

Mrs. Kristin Ziama
Worship Chair, ELCA Lutheran Church
West Bend, WI

Rev. Sonja L. Ingebritsen
Pastor, Community of Hope United Church of Christ
Madison, WI

Mr. Steven C. Davis
Lay Leader, UMC-WFB
Glendale, WI

Rev. Yeprem Kelegian
Arch-Priest, Armenian Church of America
Racine, WI

Rev. Carolyn Dugan
Minister, American Baptist Churches
Randolph, WI