



FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK

P.O. Box 29016 • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 202-527-7576 (fax) • www.franciscanaction.org

May 25, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke,

“What is sacred cannot be reversed.” So says James Adakai, President of the Navajo’s Olijato Chapter and members of the Bears Ears Commission. Bears Ears National Monument is sacred; our public lands are sacred. Not just for their significance to Indigenous history and existence, but because they represent the best that our country can be: a country that honors and protects its natural land and the people that inhabit it; a country that recognizes that a singular focus on profit and short-term gain only leads to long-term consequences.

As people of faith - and specifically as Franciscans - we take seriously our call to be caretakers of this earth and the life that exists because of it. A rollback on protection of national monuments would leave the most sacred and priceless land in this country vulnerable to being exploited and destroyed: an unimaginable loss. But, more symbolically, these proposed rollbacks send a deeply distressing message that this administration does not value the history, resources, or heritage of this country.

National monuments help protect God's creation and tell the stories of God's people. Bears Ears National Monument in particular, one of the first being considered for “review,” protects 100,000 archaeological and cultural sites and honors the voices of five tribes who joined together to seek protection of their shared ancestral lands and traditions. This monument, and all monuments, must not be dismantled.

We are firmly opposed to any effort to revoke or diminish protections for National Monuments and urge you to support our public lands and waters by ensuring that our current national monuments remain protected.

Sincerely,

The Franciscan Action Network