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Administration's Willful Disregard for Antiquities Act/Native American Concerns Shameful

President Trump's call to weaken protections for Utah's Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is not only tone deaf – more than 95% of comments received by the Department of the Interior supported keeping the national monuments, including 65% of comments from Utah residents – it is a spiteful disregard for the democratic process establishing the monuments and the standard legislative procedure set up to protect them. The move represents the largest elimination of protected areas in U.S. history and the most significant reductions by any president to designations made under the 1906 Antiquities Act.

The U.S. has a legal and regulatory framework in place to protect cultural heritage resources in the public interest, and to uphold the government-to-government consultation process with sovereign tribal governments. This unilateral action undermines the Antiquities Act, a century-old established process put in place by Congress for more than a century, and introduces threats to valued cultural heritage resources that, once realized, cannot be undone.

With more than 100,000 archaeological sites spread across 1.3 million acres of land, Bears Ears represents the country's most significant protected cultural landscape. Most notably, the land is profoundly sacred to many Native American tribes, including the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah Ouray, Hopi Nation, and Zuni Tribe. Also, the Presidential Proclamation that established Bears Ears is the first and only Presidential Proclamation that specifically evokes integrating indigenous traditional knowledge, central to generations of land stewardship, into the collaborative land management planning process under the Antiquities Act as part of a resource "of historic and scientific interest."

The American Anthropological Association stands with the undersigned organizations in calling on the Administration to recognize the recreational, preservation and economic benefits of our national monuments and respect the cultural heritage and spiritual traditions these lands offer.

The Society for Historical Archaeology

The American Cultural Resources Association

The Society for American Archaeology

The Coalition for American Heritage

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Founded in 1902, the [American Anthropological Association](#), with 10,000 members, is the world's largest scholarly and professional organization of anthropologists. The Association is dedicated to advancing human understanding and applying this understanding to the world's most pressing problems.