



Safeguarding K'aayelii Diné traditional cultural values

P.O. Box 371
Montezuma Creek, UT 84534
(505) 686-8778
info@kaayelii.org

Resolution in Opposition to Utah's Public Lands Initiative

WHEREAS, the Descendants of K'aayelii organization (DOK) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) established in 2014 with the purpose of preserving its homelands and protecting its indigenous culture, language, ceremonies, beliefs and values; and

WHEREAS, the Descendants of K'aayelii seek to enlighten the public of our unique history and relationship with Bears Ears, and promote the ability of our children to hold our rightful ties to ancestral homelands through traditional ceremony at this spiritual place, and to gather resources such as wood, pinions and wild berries for ceremonial purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Descendants of K'aayelii are the heirs to our aboriginal territory around the Bears Ears, which was the occupied by K'aayelii's parents, relatives and ancestors for more than 400 years until 1933 when we were forcibly relocated to Navajo reservation lands known as the "Aneth Extension" ; and

WHEREAS, ancestors of the Descendants of K'aayelii constituted an independent Band of Navajo Indians within Bears Ears and historically the Band had no tribal connections with other tribes and no Treaties with the United States; and

WHEREAS, areas in Bears Ears show traces of ancient dwellings and traditional homes, sweat lodges, livestock corrals, and burial sites and DOK families today visit these sites to pay their respect and honor their memories in the same traditions practiced by them since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, in April, 2016 the Public Lands Initiative (PLI) was described to DOK by Utah elected officials and the Sutherland Institute as a solution that would be inclusive of our history and people; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2016 the PLI was publicly released, and was found to be deeply flawed. This was the first time that official DOK representatives could take a position on the PLI and found it to be against DOK interests. Specifically, we learned the PLI attempts to misappropriate existing Utah Navajo Trust Funds, it opens lands within the Bears Ears landscape to development, and it includes a dizzying number of interests from many parties, all except those represented by DOK who have a rich anthropological footprint well documented for generations in Bears Ears as their home; and

WHEREAS, on July 27, 2016, Senator Lee hosted a Senate Energy and Natural Resources field hearing in Blanding, Utah, in which DOK officially came out against the PLI in an oral statement delivered by DOK Vice-President Denton Ben. Following this meeting in August, Senator Lee issued a press statement falsely stating that DOK supports the PLI and



Safeguarding K'aayelii Diné traditional cultural values

P.O. Box 371
Montezuma Creek, UT 84534
(505) 686-8778
info@kaayelii.org

opposes the Bears Ears National Monument; and

WHEREAS, DOK has never taken an official position for or against the use of the Antiquities Act by President Obama to create the Bears Ears National Monument;

WHEREAS, In August, 2016 DOK Board Members traveled to Washington D. C. and asked Department of the Interior officials to include our history and interests in any conservation proposal that might move forward;

WHEREAS, on September 19, 2016, Senator Mike Lee released a press statement that "Utah Navajo" will voice opposition to a national monument and specifically references a petition from DOK which does not exist; and

WHEREAS, Susie Philemon, Chester Johnson, Harrison Johnson, Lewis Singer, and Danielle Shirley are all individuals who do not represent DOK. They are not elected officials (county, state, or tribal) and represent only themselves; and

WHEREAS, DOK has deep ties to the Bears Ears landscape and requests a "seat at the table" to work with decision-makers to ensure that our interests are included in efforts to protect the Bears Ears region; and

WHEREAS, DOK can no longer sit in the backseat and stay quiet while politicians, organizations, and individuals use our name and our history for their own political gain; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that DOK has consulted with Aneth extension residents and through a majority vote strongly oppose the Utah Public Land Initiative and sets this official record forward ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOK has no position, for or against the Presidential designation of the Bears Ears National Monument for reasons of being excluded from the consultation process; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that DOK respectfully requests that our voice and the history of our people be included in any future conservation action whether it be by Congress or the President. DOK interests exist, we speak for ourselves, and we request that others not speak on our behalf.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board of the Descendants of K'aayelii on September ____, 2016.



Safeguarding K'aayelii Diné traditional cultural values

P.O. Box 371
Montezuma Creek, UT 84534
(505) 686-8778
info@kaayelii.org

Attest:

Gilbert Ben
Gilbert Ben, President

Vernon Dent
Recording Secretary