



Utah Diné Bikéyah

- a non-profit supporting Native Tribes working together to **Protect Bears Ears** -

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Secretary Zinke's Final Report on National Monuments Undermines Trust Among Native Americans Across the United States

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grassroots Native American people in Utah and beyond are deeply disappointed and aggrieved that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke appears to have recommended reducing Bears Ears National Monument in his final report to President Trump regarding the National Monuments “review.”

Utah Diné Bikéyah Board Chairman Willie Grayeyes, a community leader from Navajo Mountain, Utah, and appointed member of the BLM Utah Resource Advisory Council, stated, “Written and unwritten history tells us that Native Americans were the first occupants on the Bears Ears landscape. What we are asking for is just a small acreage compared to what was taken away from us. We ask for this simple honor to be given by the President and Secretary: do not alter or change our Proclamation.”

A report [summary](#) published by the Department of Interior strongly implies that the final report, which has not yet been made public, continues to perpetuate recommendations to shrink the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument. Secretary Zinke’s June 10 interim report suggested “the existing boundary of the BENM be modified.”

Any and all recommendations by Secretary Zinke regarding Bears Ears National Monument are fundamentally faulty because the Secretary never took the time to meet with and listen to local Native Americans, despite numerous invitations. Tribal people, whose ancestors have dwelled in and around Bears Ears for millennia, are the exclusive keepers of traditional knowledge regarding the Bears Ears cultural landscape and 100,000+ cultural/archaeological sites presently protected within its boundary. Zinke met for just one hour with tribal officials in Salt Lake City in early May.

The Department of Interior report summary duly notes, “Comments received were overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining existing monuments.” In May 2017, Interior invited public comments and 2.8 million American citizens responded: [99.2%](#) support continued protection for National Monuments.

Mark Maryboy, Utah Diné Bikéyah Board Member and former San Juan County Commissioner, stated, “The Antiquities Act was put in place for this exact purpose of protecting our Native American heritage. We followed the law in creating the Monument. If Trump attempts to reduce Bears Ears, we will challenge that action in court.”

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Utah Diné Bikéyah (pronounced di-NAY bi-KAY-uh) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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Additional Resources

- [Native Wisdom Speaks at Bears Ears National Monument: Will American Listen?](#) - new Media Kit details the purpose of BENM and what's at stake for Tribes
- [Tribal Resolutions of support for Bears Ears National Monument](#) – from Utah Tribal Leaders, Utah Navajo Chapter Houses, plus the Fort Peck Tribes of Assiniboine & Sioux, of which Secretary Zinke proudly claims to be an adopted member

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