



## Utah Diné Bikéyah

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

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### Over 200,000 Bears Ears supporters ask BLM to halt planning!

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**BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT, UTAH** – More than 200,000 public comments asking the Bureau of Land Management to halt its illegal, rushed planning process for Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) have been submitted to the federal agency. Most of these public comments center on how the planning process for BENM is short-sighted, particularly when the Tribes of the Bears Ears region through the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and other plaintiffs like Utah Diné Bikéyah, Patagonia, and our environmental allies are in litigation to **restore** Bears Ears National Monument.

“Right now, the BLM is taking public comments, but how many of our comments will be upheld or honored. That’s the question I raise,” said Willie Grayeyes, board chair for Utah Diné Bikéyah. **“If President Donald Trump is doing a unilateral move, why are we wasting our time submitting public comments. We are still in suit.”** The BENM executive order, issued by Obama in 2016, invited Tribes to have a seat at the table to advise on land management planning decisions for the region – it is not just for one part of the government to look at it, Grayeyes added.

Last December, U.S. President Donald Trump reduced Bears Ears by 85 percent, without any tribal consultation and after Bears Ears was designated in 2016 by former U.S. President Barak Obama as a national monument. Despite concerns their comments will not be taken seriously, Utah Diné Bikéyah and its allies submitted public comments that opposed the BLM’s planning process for the Shash Jaa’ and Indian Creek Units of Bears Ears National Monument and, in the event the planning process does continue to move forward, offered insight as to how BLM should manage the area to ensure protection of all the cultural resources present there. **“How can the BLM propose a management plan for the archaeology when less than 10% of the land has been surveyed?”** added Honor Keeler, executive director for Utah Diné Bikéyah, before adding, **“This is a human rights issue!”**

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