



## Utah Diné Bikéyah

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

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### **UDB: We Need a Secretary of the Interior That Works for the People**

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**BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT** – Now that Ryan Zinke, former Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI), will depart the agency he led, Utah Diné Bikéyah Assistant Director Honor Keeler (Cherokee) hopes his replacement will not marginalize Indigenous voices, will work to protect the public lands that have been managed by Native Americans since time immemorial, and will not place the interests of destructive industry over the interests of the American people. As we saw in 2016, there was overwhelming support among the American public for the 1.35 million-acre boundary of the Bears Ears National Monument and its collaborative management with tribes.

**“I am hopeful that the new Secretary of the Interior will take a more responsible stance in consulting with American Indian/Alaska Natives and protecting cultural and environmental resources that are important to all tribes,”** stated Keeler.

Secretary Zinke was the DOI official responsible for making the recommendation to shrink Bears Ears National Monument and put into motion an expedited planning process that failed to meaningfully consult with tribes and conduct the proper environmental reviews and cultural surveys. Keeler’s comments come after Trump announced that Zinke will be leaving the Department of the Interior.

**“Tribes have thousands and thousands of years of history in managing public lands. The next Secretary should visit the Bears Ears National Monument with tribes and traditional leaders to understand its cultural and religious significance and how best to manage the land. Native Americans, as experts of their own culture, should not be silenced and excluded from deciding how best to protect their sacred places and the burials of their Ancestors.”**

UDB Board member Mark Maryboy is hopeful for an appointee that works with tribes in land conservation and preservation, but knows that is unlikely. **“I will not be surprised to see a replacement that is just as bad or worse as Zinke,”** Maryboy said, before adding, **“Looking at possible replacements, I think it is time we confirm a Native American Secretary of Interior.”** Maryboy prefers an appointee who knows the land and supports the democratic process. **“We need the next Secretary to be familiar with Native American/Alaska Native tribes and a secretary that will protect objects of historic and scientific interest.”**

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