

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to express our support for restoring the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. Under the previous administration, the boundaries of both monuments were unlawfully reduced, leaving their treasured landscapes, important archeological sites, and cultural resources at risk. To ensure these important sites are preserved for future generations, we request that you use your authority under the Antiquities Act to restore both monuments to their originally intended boundaries.

In accordance with Executive Order Executive Order 13990. Secretary Haaland conducted a full review of the boundaries of both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments. During this process, the Secretary consulted with other federal agencies, Tribal governments, and Utah's congressional delegation and state leaders.

As part of that review, Secretary Haaland met with members of the Inter-Tribal Coalition, that helped develop the Bears Ears National Monument's original boundaries. The members of this coalition have been vocal with their support to restore the boundaries of the Bears Ears Monument. To these tribes, the lands hold special meaning and they have called them home for centuries. The lands also serve an important role in helping tribes to connect with their ancestors, and they help educate visitors from around the globe of the importance these places in the tribes' history. Although the tribal significance of these lands is reason enough to protect them, they also contains unique fossil records, imperiled native flora and fauna, and an ecosystem of red rock plateaus, forests, and deserts that are unique to this part of the world. But, only 15 percent of the lands of the original 1.35 million acre Bears Ears Monument remain protected, leaving the future of the importance archeological and cultural resources in jeopardy.

The lands of Grand Staircase-Escalante also face an uncertain future. The Bureau of Land Management has frequently referred to Grand Staircase-Escalante as the "Science Monument" for its unparalleled contribution to understanding Earth's geologic, paleontological, and living history. The Monument became a fixture in the area and the local economies have grown and flourished as a result. Despite the scientific importance of the lands and the impact to the local economy, nearly half of the original monument lands remains unprotected.

By restoring the boundaries of these moments, you could help protect places that secure our national memory and move closer to your goal of protecting 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.

It is our understanding that Secretary Haaland has completed the report on the monuments, shared it with you, and recommend you restore the boundaries of both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante to their original designations.

We ask you to follow Secretary Haaland's recommendation and restore the boundaries of both monuments to secure meaningful protection for these lands and the irreplaceable objects and stories they hold.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



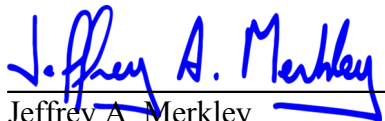
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Cc: Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory
Office of Management and Budget Acting Director Shalanda Young