



LUMMI INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

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DEPARTMENT _____ DIRECT NO. _____

June 8, 2017

To the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition:

On behalf of the Lummi Nation, I write to urge retaining the National Monument designation for Bears Ears. This is a matter of importance to all peoples who wish to honor the past and leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

The modern day Bears Ears region is within the ancestral landscape of tribes who support this designation. Their felt-association and cultural affiliation with this region is beyond dispute. It traces back thousands of years and is commemorated in tribal oral history and many ethnographic accounts. It is a centerpiece of identity for Native peoples.

The Lummi people understand the struggle to protect these sacred landscapes. We also find ourselves in a time in this country when the many—alive and yet unborn—must pay the price for the benefit of the few. We recently turned back a coal port that would have denatured our traditional fishing grounds and desecrated a historic site that dates back over 9,500 years. It would have resulted in a short-term benefit for a few companies and corporations at a very high, long-term cost to our people and other communities in the Pacific Northwest.

We made the point then, and we can make it for Bears Ears as well, that there is a double standard operating in America, today. No one would seriously consider removing existing protections for Arlington National Cemetery, from the Gettysburg battlefield, or from the sacred site of the Battle of Greasy Grass.

In truth the protections offered for Bears Ears as a National Monument are the very least it should be afforded. It is a place where Native peoples lived, created their histories, and left a lasting legacy. It is not so difficult for opponents of the National Monument to understand. It is really a matter of their priorities. Those who oppose the Monument likely want to accelerate either the extraction of resources, remove federal ownership—or both. We believe arguing for removal of the designation is a misrepresentation of a greater public good is a scandalous subterfuge, and an intentional deception brought about by a handful of local interest, lobbyists and their lawyers.

As the Hopi Tribe mentioned in their November 29, 2016 letter to the President stating their support for the designation, the “deep and timeless connections to the Bears ears is the basis for reasserting our request” for the designation. It is in our view unconscionable to attempt to remove this designation.

Please understand that we stand with you in this struggle.

Respectfully yours,

Timothy Ballew II
Chairman
Lummi Indian Business Council