



# UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE

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*Delivered by email*

January 10, 2018

Chairman Rob Bishop and Members  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: The Official Representation and Position of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Regarding the Bears Ears National Monument

Dear Chairman and Honorable Representatives:

An individual tribal member purported to represent herself as a representative of White Mesa and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe at the congressional hearing on H.R. 4532, held on January 9, 2018. Contrary to statements that she “speak[s] for Ute Mountain” and “speak[s] for White Mesa,” Ms. Suzette Morris is not an elected official representative of White Mesa, a community of Ute Mountain Ute tribal members residing on Ute Mountain Ute lands within San Juan County, Utah. The handpicking of an unelected tribal member, that serves the agenda of anti-monument special interests groups, to speak on behalf of White Mesa is a blatant violation of the unique sovereign to sovereign relationship shared between the federal government and federally-recognized Indian nations, as acknowledged in treaties, statutes, federal common law, and the U.S. Constitution.

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, not individual bands within the tribe, is the federally-recognized tribal government entity that is owed a fiduciary duty by the federal government. The seven-member elected body that comprises the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, which includes Elaine Cantsee, the White Mesa council representative, is the appropriate entity that officially speaks on behalf of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and all its communities, including White Mesa and Allen Canyon. We ask that you respect and honor the laws of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe that govern official representation on behalf of the Tribe.

By way of official resolutions, community meetings attended by tribal leaders in White Mesa, and as a member of the Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe has maintained an official position advocating for the protection of the natural, cultural, and archeological resources of our ancestral homelands through a national monument designation, as contemplated in Presidential Proclamation 9558. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is also engaged in active litigation challenging the legality of the current administration’s attempt to modify the Bears Ears National Monument. H.R. 4532 is an attempt to legislatively confirm the improper

action by the presidential administration. As such, and for the reasons indicated in the statement of the Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition which includes the Utah congressional delegation's failure to consult with any of the Indian nations, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe officially opposes H.R. 4532.

As trustees to Indian nations, we ask that the House Committee on Natural Resources refrain from the shameful practice of using individual tribal members that conveniently serves the narrative of special interests groups or the Utah congressional delegation, and not the official views of elected leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. In all future dealings and matters concerning the interests of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe we ask that you respect tribal sovereignty and the trust relationship by engaging directly with the elected Tribal Council.

Respectfully,



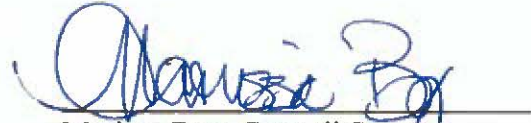
Harold Cuthair, Chairman  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



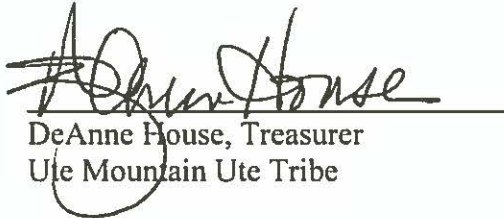
Colleen Cuthair, Vice Chairwoman  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



Elaine Cantsee  
White Mesa Council Representative  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



Marissa Box, Council Secretary  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



DeAnne House, Treasurer  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



Juanita Plentyholes, Tribal Council  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



Piisllena Rabbit, Tribal Council  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

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