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Officially known as the Zuni Tribe of the Zuni Indian Reservation

TESTIMONY
OF
THE ZUNI TRIBE

BEFORE THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS

LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON
H.R. 4532, THE SHAH JÁA NATIONAL MONUMENT AND INDIAN CREEK NATIONAL MONUMENT ACT

JANUARY 30, 2018

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Hanabusa, and respected members of the Subcommittee. I am Carleton Bowekaty, an elected member of Zuni Tribal Council and the Zuni Tribe's appointed representative on the Bears Ears Commission. On behalf of the people of the Zuni Tribe, I want to thank you for holding this second hearing on H.R. 4532 and for inviting me to testify.

The Zuni Tribe has almost 13,000 members, the vast majority of which live on tribal lands in far western New Mexico. Our reservation contains 600,000 acres. However, our aboriginal lands, as well as those of our 18 sister Pueblos in New Mexico, encompass a far greater area. In addition to the lands that we aboriginally exercised control over, there are other lands that are part of our history and culture, and that even today play an integral role in our traditions and religious ceremonies. Bears Ears is one such area, and a very important one. It, along with neighboring Mesa Verde, is part of the Colorado Plateau, the region that our ancestors lived before migrating southward into present-day New Mexico.

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and
the Bears Ears National Monument and H.R. 4532

Zuni has been actively involved in the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition since its inception. It is a unique Coalition, one that has remained focused on our mutual interest in ensuring that the remarkable cultural and natural resources found on these formerly tribal lands are protected and preserved. It was therefore entirely appropriate for the Presidential Proclamation creating the Bears Ears National Monument (the "Obama Proclamation") to have established the Bears Ears Commission, with representation from each of the five tribes, so that they can "provide guidance and recommendations on the development and implementation of management plans and on management of the monument." In contrast to the Obama Proclamation's respect for the tribes' historic and strong connections to Bears Ears, and the balance it provides to ensure that other interested parties have a voice in management issues, H.R. 4532 contains what we view as a radical provision giving local politicians effective control of

management and use decisions. The Bears Ears lands, though once controlled and used exclusively by tribes in the southwest, are now federal lands, owned by all Americans. While no disrespect is intended toward local governmental officials, most of whom work hard to better their communities, we recently saw in Oregon and Nevada what happens when local residents think they should control federal land for their own benefit in disregard of federal laws.

I want to avoid repeating the testimony of the tribal leaders from the other four Coalition tribes, but I do want this Subcommittee to know that we stand united, and that Zuni supports their substantive testimony. We also note that the tribal witnesses here today are the duly designated representatives for the five tribes, unlike the handful of individuals who have been portrayed as representing one or more of the Coalition tribes. Differences of opinion on major issues like this are inevitable, but let's be honest about our differences and not misrepresent the issues, the positions of affected tribes, or who speaks for those tribes.

We are, of course, well aware of the fact that H.R. 4532 was introduced by Representative Curtis because not everyone agrees with the Obama Proclamation designating the 1.35 million acres of federal lands as the Bears Ears National Monument. But I encourage all to carefully read the Obama Proclamation, as it presents a thorough, accurate and compelling justification for the establishment of the Monument, and provides a balanced approach for its future use and management. Zuni and the other tribes that are a part of the Inter-Tribal Coalition had frankly hoped for the protection of a significantly larger area (1.9 million acres), but accepted the reduced area as a reasonable compromise. However, we cannot support a further Congressional reduction in the area of the monument, much less the drastic reduction proposed by H.R. 4532, nor can we support legislation that fails to adequately recognize the strong historical and cultural interests of tribes in the Bears Ears National Monument. Any legislation to modify the Bears Ears National Monument should not reduce its acreage or diminish the management and policy role of the Bears Ears Commission.

Conclusion

Zuni is not a wealthy tribe and we do not come to Washington often. I am here today at the direction of our Governor and Tribal Council, and at the Tribe's sole expense. I am here because our people care enormously about the Bears Ears National Monument and stand united with the tribes represented before you today, along with our sister Pueblos in New Mexico and throughout our country, to express our adamant opposition to executive or legislative efforts to abolish or reduce Bears Ears. I also understand that the organization known as the All Pueblo Council of Governors, which includes Governors from all nineteen of New Mexico's Pueblos, will be providing the Committee with a resolution supporting the Bears Ears National Monument, opposing President Trump's Proclamation purporting to rescind the Obama Proclamation, and opposing H.R. 4532.

Finally, while the Zuni Tribe is appreciative of this opportunity to testify on H.R. 4532, we also respectfully urge Subcommittee members to schedule a hearing on a much different bill concerning Bears Ears—H.R. 4518.

Thank you for inviting me to testify, and for your consideration of my testimony on behalf of the people of Zuni.