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BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

A Partnership of the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni Governments

July 23, 2016

Honorable Jason Chaffetz
2236 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rob Bishop
123 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 201515

Dear 

Thank you very much for your email of July 18. We appreciate your coming to our summer gathering and enjoyed seeing you there.

We also thank you for the invitation, which is obviously very sincere, to meet with you and members of the Utah delegation. At the same time, we do not see how further discussions can be productive. The basic problem is that our two sides hold dramatically different views on what should be done in the Bears Ears area. Our proposal calls for strong conservation measures and deep involvement of the Tribes in monument management. The current version of the PLI is highly protective of mining and other forms of development to the detriment of land protection. Leaving aside many other issues, just to take three major concerns, we are miles apart on these:

1. We strongly believe that the Bears Ears area should be defined by the boundaries set forth in our proposal of October 15, 2015. Our documentation of this is detailed and extensive. We have spent a great deal of time and effort, and have consulted extensively with elders and other Indian people who are deeply connected to this landscape, to determine those areas

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in order to provide protection to our sacred sites and cultural resources. Many of our people believe that the area should actually be larger.

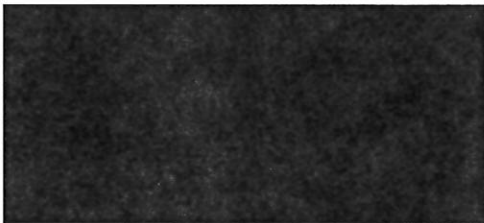
2. We have proposed a withdrawal from mining of the entire area. That is consistent with the practice in nearly all national monuments and parks, and we are satisfied that it is necessary to protect our sacred sites and cultural resources.

3. We examined the area of collaborative management in great depth, including calling in distinguished leaders on federal land management, and put forth a practical, comprehensive proposal. The current PLI bill, which allows only a weak advisory role for tribes and does not even come close to true collaborative management as described in our proposal.

We have labored extensively to reach our approaches to each of those issues and believe that our proposal presents the best way to resolve them. The PLI bill is diametrically opposed to each one of them as well as many other issues in our proposal. Frankly, we see no indication that the PLI made a serious attempt to include any aspects of our proposal.

Again, we appreciate your inquiry very much. At the same time we, as well as you, are extremely busy at this point and we do not see how it could be fruitful to go to the trouble of arranging a meeting given the profound differences between our respective approaches to the Bears Ears landscape.

Best regards,



Hopi Vice-Chairman

Co-Chair, Bears Ears

Inter-tribal Coalition



Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Council Member

Co-Chair, Bears Ears

Inter-tribal Coalition