



BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

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

January 29, 2016

RE: Tribal Opposition to Senate Amendment 3023 to S. 2012

Dear Honorable Senator,

On behalf of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC), and the more 350,000 Tribal members we represent, we are writing to strongly urge you to oppose Amendment 3023 to the Energy Policy Modernization Act (S. 2012) authored by Utah Sen. Mike Lee. This amendment would directly undermine Native American efforts to secure protection for our ancestral lands and sacred sites that are managed by the federal government.

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC) is comprised of representatives of the Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Uintah and Ouray Ute and Zuni Tribes. Together, this unique Coalition is working to protect an area of common ancestral land in Southeast Utah called the Bears Ears region. We are joined by 20 other Native American Tribes with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to the Bears Ears. Our conservation proposal is unique and wholly unprecedented. While historians, conservationists, scientists, archaeologists, and others have sponsored many requests for protection under the Antiquities Act, Tribes have never before jointly petitioned for a national monument for our own ancestral lands.

Our Tribal Governments and the local Native American people of Utah and surrounding areas that we represent, have worked for more than six years to secure protection of the Bears Ears through Congress. Unfortunately, the Utah Congressional Delegation has steadfastly refused to support conservation of the Bears Ears. We are left with no other option than to pursue this protection via the Antiquities Act. Now, Senator Lee has proposed to eliminate the only tool available to Native Americans to protect our ancestral lands, and to stop the rampant looting of gravesites and dwellings that continues in the Bears Ears today.

Beyond the Bears Ears area, we note that Native American Tribes are strong supporters of the Antiquities Act more broadly. The enclosed resolution of support for the Antiquities Act from the National Congress of the American Indian is one recent example of this widespread support. Tribes have also endorsed several recent national monument designations such as the Rio Grande del Norte in New Mexico and Chimney Rock in Colorado that have protected important sacred sites.

Protection of our sacred sites and ancestral lands remains one of the highest priorities for Tribes. We urge you to oppose amendment 3023 to S. 2012 offered by Senator Lee, and

instead to support the continued use of the Antiquities Act to protect important historic and cultural resources such as those in the Bears Ears region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AL' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Alfred Lomahquahu
Hopi Tribe Vice-Chairman &
Co-Chair Bears Ears
Inter-Tribal Coalition

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Descheenie'.

Eric Descheenie
Executive Staff Assistant to Navajo Nation Office
President and Vice President & Co-Chair, Bears
Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition