



Monument Review
MS-1530
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: The Mountaineers Support for Bears Ears National Monument

Dear Madam or Sir:

Founded in 1906, The Mountaineers is a nonprofit dedicated to helping people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. With 12,500 members, our community offers thousands of volunteer-led courses, activities, and events each year that connect people to the outdoors. The Mountaineers' conservation advocacy program is Washington's leading voice for protecting the outdoor experience and conserving the wild places where we play. Mountaineers youth programs provide over 6,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside. Mountaineers Books expands our passion for the outdoors through award-winning instructional guides, adventure narratives, and conservation photography. We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors and protecting the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

We write today to share our support for Bears Ears National Monument.

The Mountaineers places great value in public input when creating land designations, such as National Monuments. We believe Bears Ears stands as a model of such inclusive practices. The grassroots efforts to protect Bears Ears began with a coalition of five local Tribal Nations and grew to include residents, legislators, businesses, and recreationists. Prior to the designation, the Department of the Interior led a series of forums open to all citizens and interest groups. We support Bears Ears as a strong example of a process that involved a broad range of stakeholders, and are disappointed at the implication that a 15-day public comment period could somehow correct the years of public participation that led to this National Monument.

We support the Bears Ears National Monument designation, and the tribal nations and local communities who worked for years to create an inclusive protection for this area that encompasses tribal history, recreational uses, economic benefits, and the area's beautiful natural landscape.

While directed primarily at the protection of invaluable cultural resources in the Southeast Utah region, the designation of Bears Ears National Monument also protects outdoor recreation opportunities of incalculable value. Protecting outdoor recreation is an important part of designation under the Antiquities Act because it is through activities like hiking, climbing, paddling, and camping that Americans have the opportunity to experience the objects of historic or scientific interest protected under the Act.

One of the reasons Bears Ears garnered broad support is that its designation can benefit local economies. Our public lands fuel a recreation industry that supports 7.6 American million jobs and



generates \$887 billion in consumer spending. National monuments specifically have provided economic benefits to surrounding communities by boosting outdoor recreation, travel, and tourism. These communities have also clearly shown net job gains. As we work to steward our public lands for the benefit of all Americans, we believe our nation's massive recreational economy provides an incredible opportunity.

As a membership organization that helped pioneer climbing over the last century, we were heartened that Bears Ears was the first National Monument proclamation to specifically acknowledge rock climbing as a valued recreational opportunity. Through the passion of our members, we've seen the power of climbing to enrich lives, inspire stewardship of our lands, and contribute to the recreation economy. Bears Ears is home to world class climbing in areas such as Indian Creek, Lockhart Basin, Arch/Texas Canyon, Comb Ridge, and Valley of the Gods. As one of many beneficiaries of the Monument designation, we believe climbing is an important example of Bears Ears' inclusive management plan.

In closing, we believe that the process and designation that created Bears Ears National Monument is precisely what was intended when Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act into law. The area's sacred rock art and ancient cliff dwelling are of priceless cultural and historic value, and its beautiful canyons, forests, and rock formations are of unparalleled natural wonder and recreational value. We fully support both the designation of Bears Ears National Monument and the process that lead to the designation, and we oppose any steps that would diminish protections for this landscape.

Sincerely,

Katherine Hollis
Conservation and Advocacy Director
The Mountaineers