

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

January 8, 2018

Rep. Tom McClintock
Chair, House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Colleen Hanabusa
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands
422 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 4532, “Shash Jáa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument Act”

Dear Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Hanabusa:

Outdoor Alliance opposes any measures to codify recent illegal actions by the Trump Administration to rollback protections on Bears Ears National Monument. While H.R. 4532, the “Shash Jáa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument Act,” contains some positive features, for the reasons explained below, this bill would leave outdoor recreation interests considerably worse off than with the protections and management opportunities provided for by the original monument designation.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of nine member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, and Colorado Mountain Club and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, and backcountry ski and snowshoe on our nation’s public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

The designation of Bears Ears National Monument by President Obama in December of 2016 was the direct outgrowth of years of stakeholder engagement and consideration regarding the best ways to provide protections for important landscapes in southern Utah. While some of the provisions in H.R. 4532, including mineral withdrawal and dedicated funding for the monument area, would have been welcome contributions to earlier conversations regarding these landscapes, the bill as a whole would represent a step backward in managing the Bears Ears landscape for the diversity of values it provides.



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Protecting outdoor recreation opportunities is not a primary objective of the Antiquities Act, but protecting these opportunities has been one of the Antiquities Act's salutary secondary effects, and outdoor recreation is often the means by which the public is able to experience the important values and objects protected by national monuments. While Bears Ears National Monument's designation is principally aimed at protecting the area's historic, scientific, and cultural values, the designation contains a number of attributes of tremendous value for outdoor recreation that would be lost with this legislation.

H.R. 4532 does not meet the needs of the outdoor recreation community as a matter of substance. Among the invaluable aspects of the original Bears Ears designation for outdoor recreation that would be lost under H.R. 4532 are:

- **Specific acknowledgment of important recreational pursuits.**¹ Acknowledgment of the important role of outdoor recreation, including pursuits like rock climbing, mountain biking, and paddling, is essential because of the need to ensure that subsequent management plans protect and, as needed, manage for these activities. This key point is missing from H.R. 4532, meaning that subsequent management plans may inappropriately bar these activities.
- **Landscape level planning.** Throughout the years of bipartisan efforts to protect the landscape encompassing Bears Ears, a constant theme has been the need to protect these landscapes at scale. These broad-scale protections had been a part of both Rep. Bishop's PLI process and the Bears Ears designation established by President Obama. Radically cutting back the protected area of the landscape will result in piecemeal planning efforts that fail to adequately address recreational needs and opportunities at landscape scale.
- **Recreation voice on advisory bodies.** Under the original Bear Ears designation, outdoor recreation users were included in the monument's advisory committee.² Under H.R. 4532, the established management council excludes outdoor recreation interests, while simultaneously undercutting tribal sovereignty

¹ Proclamation No. 9558, 3 C.F.R. 9558 (Dec. 28, 2016) ("The area contains numerous objects of historic and of scientific interest, and it provides world class outdoor recreation opportunities, including rock climbing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, canyoneering, whitewater rafting, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Because visitors travel from near and far, these lands support a growing travel and tourism sector that is a source of economic opportunity for the region.")

² *Id.* (The Secretaries, through the BLM and USFS, shall establish an advisory committee.... including State and local governments, tribes, recreational users, local business owners, and private landowners.").



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and inappropriately handing off management decision-making on national public lands to a body that will be dominated by a non-representative, narrow set of local interests.

Outdoor Alliance opposes any efforts to reinforce recent illegal measures by the Trump Administration regarding our country's national monuments, and we ask Congress and the subcommittee to act in the long-term best interests of our country's public lands and their citizen co-owners by working to restore these protections.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Dave Wiens, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Phil Powers, Executive Director, American Alpine Club
Lee Davis, Executive Director, the Mazamas
Scott Robson, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club

