

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write with concerns regarding your agency's review of national monument designations, as instructed by executive order today.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorizes the President to "declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest ... to be national monuments."¹ Both Democratic and Republican Presidents have designated a total of 157 national monuments² of unique significance to the culture, environment, and history of our nation. According to an April 24, 2017 report by the *Washington Post*, three Presidents over the past 21 years have made decisions to set aside these important national treasures.³

We are gravely concerned that the misguided actions contemplated by the Trump Administration would cause irrevocable harm to these national treasures and erase the progress, protections, and wisdom that served as the underpinnings for these decisions. We therefore request a briefing, as well as responses to the following:

1. The Department of the Interior (DOI) "protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities."⁴ How does this exercise help the agency fulfill this obligation?

¹ 54 U.S.C. § 320301.

² Congressional Research Service, *National Monuments and the Antiquities Act* (Jan. 2017).

³ *Trump to Issue New Order Calling Into Question Two Decades of National Monument Designations*, The Washington Post (Apr. 24, 2017).

⁴ Department of the Interior, *Mission Statement* (www.doi.gov/whoweare/Mission-Statement).

2. How does this exercise ensure that areas currently designated as monuments will be preserved and protected?
3. The March 16, 2017 budget blueprint calls for a \$1.5 billion, or 12 percent reduction, to DOI's fiscal year 2018 budget.⁵ How would these proposed cuts impact the ability of DOI to manage these monuments?
4. National monuments are designated with extensive public review and participation. Was the public involved in determining that this review was necessary? If this review goes forward, how will public input be used to inform any recommendations?
5. Please immediately provide all reports of your assessments as they become available.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this issue of unique national significance, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources



Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy

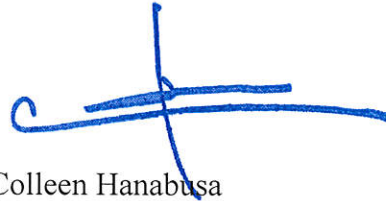


Alan S. Lowenthal
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
and Mineral Resources

⁵ Office of Management and Budget, *America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again* (Mar. 2017).



Diana DeGette
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