

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



HECTOR H. BALDERAS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

May 8, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I write to you regarding President Trump's executive order of April 26, 2017, which directs you to "review" National Monuments designated under the Antiquities Act. As New Mexicans, we are proud of our natural, historical, and cultural heritage. We hold our open and public spaces close to our hearts and rely on them for a variety of activities, both recreational and economic. Designated monuments help protect cultural and spiritual sites dating back hundreds or thousands of years, locations of great importance to New Mexico's diverse communities.

I am concerned that any attempt to undo or diminish National Monuments in New Mexico would contradict these values as well as have drastic effects on what is the lifeblood of many of the small towns and villages that surround New Mexico's monuments. The monuments can be economic engines for these communities.

The President's executive order requires the input of State, tribal, and local governments affected by a designation. I welcome the opportunity to consult with your staff and explain our position on the critical importance of New Mexico's National Monuments.

As attorney general, I have a duty to protect the legal rights of New Mexicans and ensure that any federal efforts affecting them are lawful. The Act and its limitations on undoing prior designations remain the law of the land and must be honored under any executive order. I fully expect that your review and recommendations will stay within the bounds of the law.

Please contact me to arrange a suitable time for consultation on these issues. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hector Balderas".

Hector Balderas
ATTORNEY GENERAL