

May 23, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We, the undersigned county commissioners, write to formally state our opposition to the presidential administration's review of the protections afforded our national monuments. These monuments are our heritage, our future and our template for preservation. The review is both illegal and in opposition to the wishes of those we represent as commissioners – the arm of government closest to the people of Colorado and the American West.

Colorado is blessed with spectacular public lands that span the state. Among the most cherished are national monuments, including Colorado National Monument, Browns Canyon, Canyons of the Ancients, Chimney Rock, Florissant Fossil Beds, Dinosaur, Hovenweep and Yucca House. These treasures must be protected and preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Public lands, and national monuments in particular, are major drivers behind our robust outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor recreation generates \$88.7 billion in direct consumer spending each year across the nation and supports more than 7.5 million American jobs. Including indirect impact, the industry has a \$2.1 trillion overall economic impact, supports 14.1 million jobs and generates \$80 billion in national, state and local tax revenue each year. That revenue funds schools, health care, public safety and transportation infrastructure – priorities of the current administration.

In Colorado, leaders and citizens have done the hard work of long-range planning, community outreach and development of partnerships necessary to protect our unique lands through national monument designation. To suggest that this work – in which states and local communities invested years – can be reviewed thoroughly and changed in 45 days is an insult to those who live where these national treasures exist. The willingness to compromise the Antiquities Act, which has served the nation well since 1906, leads us to question if any public land is safe from the threat of destruction under the present administration. We believe that Congress, through the legislative process, is the only proper venue to consider changing boundaries or management of national monuments.

National monuments are one of the great American ideas, created in the spirit of conservation and cultural preservation. They are the property of the American people, and a strong majority of western citizens – our constituents – support their creation and preservation. To rescind or alter them will cultivate an environment of mistrust and threaten any positive working relationship between the federal government and local communities. We urge you to consider the consequences of these actions and the precedent this review sets for the future of our nation and generations to come.

Sincerely,

Eva Henry, Commissioner, Adams County  
Steve O'Dorisio, Commissioner, Adams County  
Nancy Jackson, Commissioner, Arapahoe County  
Deb Gardner, Commissioner, Boulder County  
Elise Jones, Commissioner, Boulder County  
Keith Baker, Commissioner, Chafee County  
Tim Mauck, Commissioner, Clear Creek County  
Randy Wheelock, Commissioner, Clear Creek County  
Kathy Chandler Henry, Commissioner, Eagle County  
Jill Ryan, Commissioner, Eagle County  
Linda Isenhardt, Commissioner, Gilpin County  
Gail Watson, Commissioner, Gilpin County  
Jonathan Houck, Commissioner, Gunnison County  
John Messner, Commissioner, Gunnison County  
Gwen Lachelt, Commissioner, La Plata County  
Ben Tisdell, Commissioner, Ouray County  
Steve Childs, Commissioner, Pitkin County  
Patti Clapper, Commissioner, Pitkin County  
George Newman, Commissioner, Pitkin County  
Greg Poschman, Commissioner, Pitkin County  
Rachel Richards, Commissioner, Pitkin County  
Timothy Corrigan, Commissioner, Routt County  
Jason Anderson, Commissioner, Saguache County  
Hilary Cooper, Commissioner, San Miguel County  
Kris Holstrom, San Miguel County  
Joan May, Commissioner, San Miguel County  
Thomas Davidson, Commissioner, Summit County  
Dan Gibbs, Commissioner, Summit County  
Karn Stiegelmeier, Commissioner, Summit County

CC: Sen. Michel Bennet, Sen. Cory Gardner, Rep. Diana DeGette, Rep. Jared Polis, Rep. Scott Tipton, Rep. Ken Buck, Rep. Doug Lamborn, Rep. Mike Coffman