



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Nation Council Celebrates the Protection of the Bears Ears National Monument

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 24th Navajo Nation Council commends President Joe Biden for signing his proclamation on restoring protections for the Bears Ears National Monument. This action reinstates 1.36 million acres as a protected area for the national monument.

The Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe worked together with President Barack Obama to designate the Bears Ears region as a national monument in 2016.

In 2017, President Donald Trump signed Proclamation 9681 that downsized the monument by 85 percent and opened the land to natural resource extraction.

“Bears Ears National Monument is our home and a sacred place close to the heart of the Navajo people,” said Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Ts’ah Bii’ Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato). “We have lived, farmed, hunted, gathered herbs, and conducted ceremonies on this sacred land for hundreds of years. Bears Ears is a sacred site that will be protected for future generations.”

In July 2019, Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr., sponsored Naabik’iyáti’ Committee Resolution No. NABIJY-41-19 to support congressional legislation that would expand the boundaries of the Bears Ears National Monument and to request a proclamation for its redesignation.

“This proclamation restores and heals the land that is sacred to the Navajo people and many tribal nations,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Łichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh). “The Navajo Nation Council commends Secretary Debra Haaland for her leadership as we continue to work with President Biden to protect our land, water, and sacred sites.”

According to the Interior Department, the proclamation also restores the membership and conditions of the Bears Ears Commission with tribal representatives to provide guidance and recommendations on the management of the monument.

The White House said, “The President’s protection of these three national monuments is among a series of steps the Administration has taken to restore protections to some of America’s most cherished lands and waters, many of which are sacred to Tribal Nations.”

Two months ago, Council Delegate Mark Freeland, Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr., Delegate Nathaniel Brown, and Delegate Charlaine Tso met with Utah Governor Spencer J. Cox to request support for the restoration recommendation provided by Interior Secretary Debra Haaland.

“On my visit to Utah, I had the distinct honor to speak with many people who care deeply about this land,” said Secretary Debra Haaland. “The historical connection between Indigenous peoples and Bears Ears is undeniable; our Native American ancestors sustained themselves on the landscape since time immemorial and evidence of their rich lives is everywhere one looks. This living landscape must be protected so that all Americans have the profound opportunity to learn and cherish our history.”

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