



## **Navajo Nation Raises Concerns Over Monument Rollbacks**



*The landscape within Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, where 13 tribal nations, including the Navajo Nation have long called for protection of their ancestral lands rich in cultural, ecological, and spiritual significance. Photo Courtesy of Blake McCord / Grand Canyon Trust (Original source: [grandcanyontrust.org](https://grandcanyontrust.org))*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In response to recent federal developments surrounding national monument protections, the Navajo Nation has acted to ensure its voice is heard in any discussions about changes to monument boundaries or management. With support from the Navajo Nation Washington Office, letters were delivered last week to Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, leadership at the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service. These letters called for tribal consultation regarding any changes specifically to the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. The Navajo Nation is one of 13 tribes with ancestral ties to and claims of stewardship over the monument after its establishment by President Joseph Biden in 2023.

This outreach follows a June 2025 legal opinion issued by the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ"), which raised alarms about the possibility of the Trump Administration downsizing monument boundaries and rolling back protections. The Navajo Nation is not alone in its concerns. On June 11, 2025, Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) issued a public statement condemning the DOJ's June 25 opinion and the threat it poses to monuments recently designated in California, including the Chuckwalla and Sattitla Highlands. During a Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing, Padilla questioned Secretary

Burgum directly in reference to maintaining respect for tribal sovereignty in the preservation of public lands.

In his July 2025 letter, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren reaffirmed the Navajo Nation's ancestral connection to the Grand Canyon region and its ongoing support for maintaining the monument's current boundaries. He outlined the Nation's previous work with federal agencies to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into long-term land management efforts. The letter also noted documented public backing for tribal stewardship, including widespread bi-partisan support from Arizona voters.

Navajo Nation President Nygren and Speaker Crystalyne Curley were present in 2023 when President Biden signed the proclamation establishing Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni as a national monument. Since then, the Navajo Nation has remained actively involved in monument-related discussions, including participating in weekly coordination calls with the Grand Canyon Trust and allied stakeholders.