



July 23, 2026

Re: Outdoor Businesses Unite Against Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante Cuts

Dear Secretary Burgum, Director Pearce, and Chief Schultz:

On behalf of The Conservation Alliance (TCA), Brands for Public Lands, and the undersigned businesses, we write to express our firm and unequivocal opposition to the presidential proclamations shrinking Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments issued on July 13, 2026.

These boundary reductions directly overlook the interests, expertise, and sovereign authority of Tribal Nations. Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments have long been championed by Tribal Nations, which recognize them not only as protection for sacred ancestral homelands and cultural resources, but as a foundation for co-stewardship. Unilaterally rolling back these protections overrides Tribal sovereignty and discards the collaborative, government to government process developed, strengthened, and supported across designation and management plans.

These proclamations also threaten outdoor businesses and the communities that depend on them. Our coalition represents small, medium, and large businesses whose livelihoods depend on the durability and consistency of public land protections, including: manufacturers, retailers, local guides and outfitters, photographers, and hospitality providers, along with their employees and customers. Protected public lands are not a peripheral amenity to these businesses, rather, they are core economic infrastructure that are vital to the \$1.3 trillion outdoor recreation economy.

Unlike boom-and-bust extractive industries, monument-driven economies are more stable over time. According to recent data, since 2001, the regions surrounding Bears Ears National Monument have seen employment grow by 31% and real per capita income rise by 44%¹. Since 2001, counties around Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument have seen employment grow by 51%, population increase by 26%, and per capita income climb by 41% through 2022, with local worker salaries rising by 26% over the same period². Reversing these protections puts these gains, the sustainable economies they underpin, and the businesses and workers who depend on them directly at risk in favor of speculative and largely unproven extraction opportunities³.

Today, small businesses and communities throughout southern Utah have built strong, sustainable, tourism-based economies connected to these landscapes. Outdoor businesses, ranchers, and hunting and fishing outfitters alike depend on regulatory certainty to invest with confidence in their communities.

¹ "Economic performance of communities near national monuments," Headwaters Economics, January 20, 2026.

² " "

³ "A Diminished Monument," Washington Post, January 19, 2019.





Reversing durable, community-negotiated protections signals to every public lands stakeholder that agreements based on science and consensus could be discarded without warning or rationale, discouraging further investment.

The move to modify boundaries and significantly reduce the size of both monuments defies public sentiment. According to recent polling, 91% of voters across the West express support for keeping existing national monument designations in place⁴, and 71% of Utah voters support keeping Bears Ears protected as a national monument, while 74% say the same about Grand Staircase-Escalante⁵. This overwhelming public support reflects the fact that both Monuments accommodate multiple uses, thoughtfully deemed appropriate for their compatibility with the landscape. Rolling back the size of these monuments directly opposes the views of a majority of local and regional residents.

Trimming down the monuments by such a significant amount of acreage - justifying it as protecting the smallest compatible areas - without any significant scientific evidence is a blatant affront to the long-held principles of community-centered and transparent monument management. Both monuments' boundaries were the product of deliberate planning and rigorous public input and Tribal engagement - reaffirmed as recently as 2025 - adhering to the legal intent of the Antiquities Act signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. Modifying Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante so significantly now, without that same rigor, abandons precedent, creates uncertainty for the communities who engaged in planning in good faith, and is likely to be challenged in court.

We have repeatedly offered to sit down with leadership across land management agencies to find common ground and support this Administration's goals where possible. Rescinding these protections without proper engagement erodes the trust our industry has worked to build.

These rescissions carry serious consequences for Tribal Nations, businesses, and communities across the region. We request clarity on next steps without delay, and we will continue working with the Administration and Congress to ensure these landscapes remain protected for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Paul Hendricks
Executive Director
The Conservation Alliance

⁴ 2026 Conservation in the West poll, Colorado College, February, 2026.

⁵ "Utah Voters Strongly Support Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Poll Shows," New Bridge Strategy, January 9, 2025.





Submitted on behalf of and in partnership with the following companies and organizations:

1% for the Planet
Burlington, VT

49th State Brewing
Anchorage, AK

Adventure Labworks
Denver, CO

Adventure Travel Conservation Fund
Monroe, WA

AdventureKEEN Publishing
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The Conservation Alliance

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