



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Delegate Filfred requests continued support for Bears Ears National Monument

**WINDOW ROCK** – Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tóíikan, Red Mesa), who also serves on the Bears Ears Commission, is urging the public to continue submitting comments to the U.S. Department of the Interior to support and preserve the Bears Ears National Monument. The monument is located in the southeastern portion in the state of Utah and sits on Navajo ancestral land areas.



**PHOTO: Council Delegate Davis Filfred along with members of the Bears Ears Tribal Commission and other tribal leaders in Washington D.C. on May 25, 2017.**

Delegate Filfred stated that the public comment period that specifically addresses the Bears Ears National Monument ended on May 26, however, the public still has until July 10 to submit a comment regarding Bears Ears in relation to President Trump's executive order directing the U.S. DOI to review certain national monuments that were established since 1996.

The U.S. DOI is conducting the review under the Antiquities Act of 1906, and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke will use the review to determine whether each designation or expansion conforms to the policy stated within the executive order to formulate recommendations for Presidential actions, legislative proposals, or other appropriate actions to carry out that policy.

Delegate Filfred, who attended a meeting with Acting Deputy Secretary James Cason on May 25 in Washington, D.C., said the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument was a 10-year effort by local Navajo communities and land preservation groups that had finally succeeded.

“There is a misconception out there that former President Barack Obama designated the monument in a hasty manner—that is totally false. This initiative began over 10 years ago, so to repeal it’s designation in only a few months is irrational,” said Delegate Filfred.

According to the U.S. DOI, the notice identifies 27 national monuments under review and invites public comments to supplement the review.

Delegate Filfred said that many Navajo people do not have access to the Internet to submit their comments, and many that live in the Bears Ears area only speak the Navajo language. He urged federal officials to respond to the Navajo Nation’s concerns.

“Federal officials need to provide tribes the opportunity to submit their input and allow an extension of the comment period. Many of our Navajo citizens do not understand what the comment period will do because there is a language barrier. We need more time to reach these individuals,” said Delegate Filfred.

To submit a comment regarding the federal review of the national monuments, you may submit your comments to: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=DOI-2017-0002-0001>. The public comment period will end on July 10, 2017.

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