



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council calls for Tribal stewardship and protection of Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument



Council Delegate Curtis Yanito emphasized concerns about Grand Staircase-Escalante that could influence broader national discussions regarding tribal consultation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On May 12-13, during a two-day congressional visit to Washington, D.C., Council Delegate Curtis Yanito addressed concerns regarding the protection of the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument.

Delegate Yanito and partners from the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition met with congressional staff and stakeholders to discuss concerns over efforts to use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to overturn the current Grand Staircase-Escalante Resource Management Plan. Discussions focused on preserving Tribal consultation efforts, maintaining government-to-government relationships, and protecting culturally and historically significant landscapes connected to Tribal communities.

Coalition representatives reported that the House Rules Committee agenda did not include Grand Staircase-Escalante, indicating that a House vote concerning a CRA challenge to the monument's Resource Management Plan is not expected in the immediate term. Congressional members participating in recent meetings also indicated that offices involved in discussions had not received formal notice regarding scheduled House or Senate action. Coalition partners noted that any potential movement on the matter could shift to the Senate in the coming weeks.

The Resource Management Plan represents a collaborative framework intended to strengthen Tribal participation in monument management. Tribal leaders, cultural specialists, and natural resource representatives invested significant time and expertise in developing the plan, which incorporates Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and stewardship principles to guide management decisions affecting sacred sites and culturally significant landscapes. The plan also addresses the protection of archaeological resources, wildlife habitat, and areas that continue to hold cultural and spiritual importance for Tribal communities.

Delegate Yanito emphasized that Tribal involvement in stewardship efforts reflects long-standing responsibilities carried by Indigenous communities and extends beyond policy discussions.

“Grand Staircase-Escalante carries generations of cultural teachings, sacred connections, and responsibilities that our people continue to uphold today,” Delegate Yanito said. “The work completed through consultation and collaboration represents years of commitment by Tribal leaders.”

Delegate Yanito added that the voices of cultural practitioners and community leaders who understand the importance of protecting these lands remain critical to the discussion.

Coalition partners also raised concerns regarding the potential long-term impacts of overturning the Resource Management Plan through the CRA. Congressional members noted that CRA action could prohibit future management plans considered “substantially similar,” creating uncertainty surrounding future co-stewardship efforts and implementation of cultural resource protections.

Delegate Yanito further emphasized that the issue extends beyond Grand Staircase-Escalante itself and could influence broader national discussions regarding Tribal consultation, monument management practices, and recognition of Indigenous stewardship principles in future federal actions.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council and the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition will continue advocating for meaningful government-to-government consultation, collaborative co-stewardship approaches, and continued implementation of protections established through the current Resource Management Plan.

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