

To: Canyon County District Manager Lance Porter

Subject: Monument Management Plans for the Indian Creek and Shash Jaa Units of Bears Ears National Monument

Date: April 10, 2018

On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose 900 congregations across North America include 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of Americans Rabbis, whose membership includes more than 2,000 Reform rabbis, I write to express our comments on the monument management plans for the Indian Creek and Shash Jaa units of Bears Ears National Monument. We believe all management plans for lands inside the original boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument as designated in Proclamation 9558, including lands not in the Indian Creek and Shash Jaa units, should be managed under the management objectives and standards of protection set forth in Proclamation 9558.

Public lands are important spaces in our communities. Among other uses, they serve as centers of outdoor recreation and places to contemplate the wonder of God's natural world. As Jews, we are inspired by our texts' consistent reminders of our obligation to be responsible stewards of the earth. We are commanded "to till and to tend," (Genesis 2:15) in a relationship that necessitates both access to nature and its careful preservation. Our history and tradition has further taught us the critical role land can play in the understanding of cultural heritage, the maintenance of spiritual wellbeing, and the building of community.

As a site with ecological historical, and sacred significance, the entirety of Bears Ears National Monument needs the full management and protections that the national monument designation provides. Bears Ears is home to tremendous biological and geological diversity and is representative of a critical ecosystem that needs protection. Bears Ears was also the first, and remains the only, national monument created to preserve American Indian cultural heritage. Bears Ears as it was previously designated was already too small to fully protect these

historic and sacred sites for the Navajo, Hopi, Uintah & Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni. Removing protections and shrinking the area and management of the monument endangers sacred land that these tribes have spent years trying to protect and would endanger the more than 100,000 archaeological sites found within the original boundaries of Bears Ears.

Especially given the ongoing litigation concerning the changes to Bears Ears National Monument, I urge you to manage all land that was contained within the original boundaries of the monument in line with the standards of protection set forth in Proclamation 9558.

Sincerely,
Barbara Weinstein
Director
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism