

February 1, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We, as faith organizations across the country, hold in common the concept of sacredness and the desire to protect God's creation, our common home.

We were heartened to hear your promise to protect Avi Kwa Ame, known as Spirit Mountain, and designate it through the Antiquities Act as a National Monument. Considered sacred to ten Yuman speaking Tribes as well as the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute, Avi Kwa Ame holds significant spiritual significance. The Yuman Tribes believe the mountain is the spiritual birthplace of the Tribes. Protecting religious liberty and honoring sacred sites demands that this land be permanently protected as a National Monument.

A National Monument at Avi Kwa Ame would also preserve the ecological value of these lands. There are 34 listed sensitive species, including the desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, and golden eagles that reside in the area. Importantly, Avi Kwa Ame is crucial to achieving our national and global goal of preserving 30 percent of lands and waters by the year 2030, advancing the America the Beautiful initiative.

The proposed National Monument boundaries contain important spiritual and sacred sites that are an active part of Tribal religious ceremonies. Keeping these boundaries, negotiated with the Tribes, as part of the future National Monument designation, is critical to maintaining the spiritual significance of Avi Kwa Ame.

While our organizations support clean energy, we know that designating Avi Kwa Ame does not preclude clean energy development elsewhere in the state. There are 9 million acres available on Bureau of Land Management land in Nevada for utility scale solar and 16.8 million acres available for wind energy projects. We can heed our stewardship mandate to care for God's creation through clean energy and protect the sacred site of Avi Kwa Ame.

We urge you to designate Avi Kwa Ame as a National Monument with great speed as a way to ensure that the ecological, recreational and, most importantly spiritual, aspects of these sacred lands can be safeguarded.

Sincerely,

Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Creation Justice Ministries
Franciscan Action Network
GreenFaith
Interfaith Power & Light
Islamic Society of North America
National Religious Partnership for the Environment
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity
Unitarian Universalist Association
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society