Dear Member of Congress,

As religious leaders in the Catholic community, we know that many people meet God in the great outdoors. Parks and public lands foster healthy communities and nurtured souls. Local, state and federal parks are where we, as a nation, pray and play. National parks and monuments not only provide recreation opportunities, but also embody our unique cultural heritage. National monuments like Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad, Cesar Chavez, Soldiers Home, and Bears Ears give voice to the stories of our collective national fabric.

All major faith traditions lift up care for creation as a religious imperative. Good stewardship of our natural, spiritual, historical, and cultural heritage is an important part of our role as caretakers of God’s creation and co-creators of a collective national memory that reflects dignity and respect for all.

We are dismayed that President Trump, in an unprecedented action, eliminated more than two million acres of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments. This was the largest elimination of protections for public lands in U.S. history. As defenders of religious liberty, we are concerned that the religious practices of Hopi, Navajo, Zuni and Ute tribes, who all hold the land in Bear Ears as sacred and requested the national monument designation, as well as the voices of leaders from dozens of additional tribes, have been ignored.

The Antiquities Act of 1906, used to originally designate Bears Ears and other national monuments, does not grant the power to eliminate protections. It only grants the power to designate national monuments. This important tool has been used by both Republican and Democrat presidents to designate such iconic places as the Statue of Liberty and the Grand Canyon.

As we celebrate the 22nd anniversary of the designation of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, we urge you to support our parks and public lands by opposing efforts to undermine the Antiquities Act or diminish national monuments.

Sincerely,

Tim Hall, Franciscan, Arizona  
Sister Marilyn Moore, Catholic, Arkansas  
Sherrill Futrell, Methodist, California  
Joanne Tenney, Catholic, California  
Sister Marion Bill, Daughter of Charity, California  
Rev. Arlene Flaherty, JPIC Office SSND, Connecticut  
Sister Michele Gothro FCM, Franciscan Community, Florida
Sister Margaret Scally, Roman Catholic, Illinois  
Sister Genarsoe Buechler, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Illinois  
Sister Georgene L. Wilson, Wheaton Franciscans, Illinois  
Sister Kathleen Mulcahy, Dominican Sister, Illinois  
Rev. Mary Heenan, Daughter of Charity, Indiana  
Sister Sister Jane Burger, Daughter of Charity, Indiana  
Rev. Anna Marie Broxterman, Sisters of St. Joseph, Kansas  
Sister Anne Lamoureux, Daughters of Charity, Lamoureux  
Sister Juanita Robichaud, Little Franciscans, Maine  
Sister Ann Mary Dougherty, Daughters of Charity, Maryland  
Nancy Corrigan, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Judith Rojas, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Lani Manseau, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Nancy Dunn, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Sharon Richardt, Daughters of Charity, Maryland  
Sister Patricia Endres, Roman Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Diane Bardol, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Marie Lucey, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Ann Scholz, SSND, Roman Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Cas Carr, Catholic, Maryland  
Rev. Sr. Lawrence Marie Callahan, Catholic, Maryland  
Sister Ann Lynch, Roman Catholic, Massachusetts  
Sister Denise Granger, Sisters of St. Joseph, Massachusetts  
Sister Mary Louise Stubbs, Roman Catholic, Michigan  
Sister Nancy Jamroz, Catholic, Michigan  
Sister RM Krebs, Catholic, Minnesota  
Sister Paulissa Jirik, Catholic, Minnesota  
Sister Gladys Schmitz, Roman Catholic, Minnesota  
Sister Mary Walz, Catholic, Mississippi  
Kathy Sandknop, Roman Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Honora Remes, Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Rita Huebner, Roman Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Francis Voivedich, Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Elizabeth Ahrens, Sisters of St. Joseph, Missouri  
Sister Danielle Bonetti, Sisters of St. Joseph, Missouri  
Sister Judith Hebert, Daughter of Charity, Missouri  
Sister Helen Brewer, Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Mary O'Gorman, Roman Catholic, Missouri  
Sister Jeanene Yackey, Sister of St Joseph, Missouri  
Sister Mary Ann Schmieding, Catholic, Nebraska  
Althea Fusco, Srs of the Divine, New York  
Rev. Marian Hamwey, Daughters of Charity, New York  
Sister Diane Louttit, Daughters of Charity, New York  
Sister Faith Colligan, Daughter of Charity, New York
Sister Nora Sweeney, Daughters of Charity, New York
Sister Lucille Coldrick, Roman Catholic, New York
Sister Valerie Heinonen, Roman Catholic, New York
Sister Mary Ann Smith, Catholic, New York
Janice Davin, Catholic, North Carolina
Sister Marie Edrich, Roman Catholic, Ohio
Sister Geraldine Nowak, OSF, Sisters of St. Francis, Ohio
Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer, Benedictine Sisters, Oregon
Mary Kreider, Roman Catholic, Pennsylvania
Sister Mary McMahon, Catholic, Pennsylvania
Sister Kari Pohl, Roman Catholic, Pennsylvania
Sister Rose Gansle, Catholic, Texas
Jason Miller, Catholic, Virginia
Rev. Les Schmidt, Roman Catholic, Virginia
Annette Roy, OFS, Catholic, WA
Juan Lezcano, OFS, Roman Catholic, Washington
Rev. William Petro, Catholic, West Virginia
Sister Judith Miller, Roman Catholic, Wisconsin
Sister Sr. Margaret Ann Arnold, School Sisters, Wisconsin
Sister Suzanne Moynihan, Roman Catholic, Wisconsin
Sister Regina McKillip, Catholic, Wisconsin
Sister Ruth Battaglia, Sister, Wisconsin