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July 14, 2021

Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We write to highlight the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's priorities, which include protecting Bears Ears National Monument. We also invite you to visit Towaoc and the surrounding Tribal communities.

Protecting Bears Ears is a top priority for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. We were grateful to see you meet with Tribal leaders, including Chairman Manuel Heart of the Ute Mountain Ute during your recent visit to the Bears Ears National Monument. We strongly support the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition's request for President Biden to expand the Bears Ears National Monument to 1.9 million acres. We look forward to working with you to ensure Bears Ears National Monument has the protection and management resources it deserves.

We also encourage you to accept Chairman Manuel Heart's invitation to visit Towaoc and the surrounding Tribal communities to hear about their priorities. The Tribe has a successful Farm and Ranch Enterprise, a bonded construction company, a busy casino and hotel, and a strong desire to engage in the Administration's renewable energy goals. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe also has many areas of concern as it works hard to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns include significant housing needs, requests for greater law enforcement support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a critical lack of broadband, and environmental challenges from a nearby uranium mill.

Visiting with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is an opportunity for you to hear directly about the issues affecting Tribal members' daily lives. We would welcome the opportunity to help arrange a meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator