

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 14, 2025

Doug Burgum  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Secretary Burgum:

As the Senators from Arizona, we write to you about the importance of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, Arizona's newest national monument. The unique Grand Canyon landscape is a key driver of Arizona's tourism and recreation economy. The monument is also of cultural significance for regional tribes and the history of our nation. This monument designation was the culmination of years of effort by tribal and local leaders to protect the area for future generations.

Today, people from around the nation and the globe travel to the Grand Canyon and the lands that surround it. They visit numerous small businesses, support over 10,000 jobs, and contribute over \$1 billion to Arizona's economy. Many of these businesses were vocal supporters of the designation of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument.

The Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument area includes distinctive and unique natural and cultural objects of historical significance that have long been recognized. In 1893, significant portions of the monument were designated as the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve. In 1908, President Roosevelt designated the deepest canyons as a monument. In 1919, Congress established Grand Canyon National Park from that earlier monument. This history shows that for over a century, federal officials have understood that this is a unique landscape worthy of protection.

The monument includes over 3,000 historic and cultural sites, including twelve that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When the monument was proclaimed, Red Butte was visible behind the speakers. Red Butte is sacred to five Tribes and is the site of numerous pieces of pottery and stone tools that demonstrate thousands of years of human activity. In some areas of the monument, there are sites going back to the Stone Age that may be up to 10,000 years old. These sites are worthy of protection on those grounds alone.

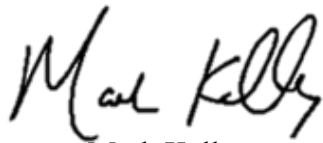
The unique geologic and hydrologic features of the area are of high scientific interest and may be important to underground water across arid regions beyond the monument. The Toroweep fault is one of the most active in Arizona and crosses the monument. The Kanab Plateau is an important area for geology study, where faults, tectonics, and other aspects of geology can be studied.

The monument is also home to diverse and important wildlife, including both California Condors and Desert Bighorn Sheep that have been successfully reintroduced to the area. The area is also home to a bison herd, an icon of the west and our nation.

This isn't a partisan issue. My constituents across the political spectrum overwhelmingly support Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni National Monument. A recent poll shows that 80 percent of Arizonans support the monument, including 72 percent of Republicans and 71% of voters who supported President Trump. The national monument also has the support of every Arizona tribe, hunting and fishing organizations, faith groups, state and local elected officials from a spectrum of political leanings, and local businesses.

Tribes and Arizona communities deserve to move on with the management planning process for this National Monument rather than worry that there may be attempts to remove it. Given the importance of the Monument to Tribal Nations and Communities, our economy, and immense public support we ask that you reassure Arizonans that Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni National Monument will remain intact for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator