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Reduction to Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Boundaries Ignores Input from Millions of Americans; California Desert National Monuments Still At Risk

Riverside, CA -- Inland Empire Waterkeeper reacts with strong disapproval today of President Trump's announcement of elimination of important portions of Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments. Trump's announcement comes after Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended shrinking the boundaries of both national monuments. Trump's action repeals protection of over 2 million acres.

"President Trump's action today is the largest elimination of public land protections in U.S. history and is diametrically opposed to what the public wants." said Megan Brousseau, Inland Empire Waterkeeper Associate Director. "Credible legal scholars are in agreement that the Antiquities Act does not grant a president the authority to eliminate or significantly alter a national monument. We must continue to stand together and declare that an attack on one monument is an attack on all."

During a 60-day comment period the Department of the Interior received over [2.8 million comments](#), [over 99 percent](#) of which called for protecting or expanding existing national monument boundaries. National monuments are also a critical component of the nation's economy, especially for communities in San Bernardino County that benefit from tourism, outdoor recreation, and increased quality of life associated with their local monument.

As an indicator of how protected public lands are economic engines among their region, visitors to Joshua Tree and Death Valley National Parks and the Mojave National Preserve contributed \$265 million to the local economies in 2016, supporting nearly 3,700 jobs. National monuments are also tremendous drivers of California's economy. Outdoor recreation in the state directly generates approximately 691,000 jobs and \$92 billion in consumer spending each year. More announcements are expected from the Trump Administration in coming weeks against other national monuments, eliminating protections for prized public lands and oceans across our nation.

“We are deeply concerned that national monuments in California and elsewhere could be on the chopping block, opening up protected historic and cultural sites, unique wildlife and plants habitat, and recreation areas to development,” said Brousseau. “We hope that the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors will publicly oppose any reductions to our national monuments, including the California Desert’s Mojave Trails, Castle Mountains, and Sand to Snow.”

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About Inland Empire Waterkeeper

Established in 2005, Inland Empire Waterkeeper is a non-profit environmental organization whose mission is to protect and enhance the water quality of the Upper Santa Ana River Watershed through programs of advocacy, education, research, restoration and enforcement. As the only nonprofit in the Inland Empire dedicated to addressing water quality issues in the Santa Ana Watershed, Waterkeeper focuses on grassroots, community-oriented projects including water sampling, habitat restoration, community clean-ups and robust educational programs, to protect waterways throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Waterkeeper uses a regional, collaborative approach to watershed management working with local, state, and federal government agencies to ensure proactive water policy while promoting compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act and other environmental laws for swimmable, drinkable, fishable waters. For more information, visit www.iewaterkeeper.org.