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December 28, 2016

**Hopi Tribe Celebrates Protection of Ancestral Lands in Utah**  
*Statement from the Hopi Tribe on Bears Ears National Monument*

**Kykotsmovi, AZ (December 28, 2016)** Responding to today's White House announcement that President Obama has preserved Bears Ears National Monument, Hopi Vice Chairman and Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Co-Chair Alfred Lomahquahu issued the following statement:

“On behalf of the Hopi people, *Hopisenom*, we commend President Obama for his action to permanently protect the Bears Ears in Utah as a national monument. Our ancestors settled and lived in the Bears Ears region during their long migration to *Tuuwanasavi* (the Center of the Earth) on the Hopi Mesas where we reside today.

We have spoken out for years about the need to permanently protect this living cultural landscape through a special designation like a national monument, but those calls fell on deaf ears in Congress. We appreciate President Obama's and his administration's efforts to work with and listen to Tribes, and we are pleased that a promise to protect Native American ancestral lands has been kept.”

Today's action to protect Bears Ears uses the Antiquities Act of 1906, a tool created to protect cultural and historic objects like cliff dwellings and rock art which are found in abundance at Bears Ears. But these things are far more than just objects. They are our footprints, and part of a living landscape that sustains our Hopi identity. What some see as “ruins” are not abandoned. Hopi ancestors who lived around Bears Ears continue to inhabit the land today, and we visit their homes today as one would visit a relative, delivering prayers and offerings to ensure their wellbeing.

Today's action to designate Bears Ears National Monument assures that Bears Ears landscape will be spared from the grave robbing, looting, disrespectful desecration, and destructive mining and exploitation that was sure to befall this place without the permanent protection offered by this new national monument.

The Hopi Tribe's support for Bears Ears National Monument does not end today as it is designated. We are committed to a lasting partnership with federal land managers to collaboratively manage these lands in perpetuity, to advocate for appropriate financial resources to care for Bears Ears, and to defend the national monument and the Antiquities Act of 1906

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from those who may seek to undermine it. Our support, like this new Bears Ears National Monument, will endure.

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