

**SOUTHERN UTAH WILDERNESS ALLIANCE * GRAND CANYON TRUST *
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION * THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY *
CONSERVATION LANDS FOUNDATION * SIERRA CLUB *
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

July 11, 2023

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman, Senate Committee on
Energy & Natural Resources

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Energy & Natural Resources

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
Chair, Subcommittee on Public Lands,
Forests & Mining

The Honorable Mike Lee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Public Lands,
Forests & Mining

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, Subcommittee Chair Cortez Masto and Ranking Subcommittee Member Lee,

The above-listed organizations are pleased to offer their support of a land exchange between the United States Department of the Interior and the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) as contemplated in President Biden's Proclamation establishing the Bears Ears National Monument (Proclamation 10285).

Unified ownership and management of federal and SITLA lands within the exterior Bears Ears National Monument boundaries by the Bureau of Land Management should lead to better protection of monument objects and values, including irreplaceable cultural, paleontological, biological and geological resources. Moreover, consolidation of federal ownership and management in the greater Nokai Dome, White Canyon, Upper Red Canyon, Copper Point and Mancos Mesa areas of San Juan County, Utah, should likewise provide for more consistent protection of many of these same resources. S.1405, *Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration Exchange Act of 2023*, would accomplish many of these important goals and we support that outcome.

It is also important that the process for determining approximately equal value between the lands identified for exchange between the Interior Department and SITLA is handled fairly and efficiently. We look forward to further discussions regarding the appraisal and valuation process detailed in S. 1405.

Sincerely,

Stephen Bloch
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Kristen Brengel
National Parks Conservation Association

Athan Manuel
Sierra Club

Scott Miller
The Wilderness Society

Tim Peterson
Grand Canyon Trust

Kabir Green
Natural Resources Defense Council

Danielle Murray
Conservation Lands Foundation