

EXHIBIT C



May 11, 2017

EXPEDITED FOIA REQUEST

Freedom of Information Officer
Council on Environmental Quality
730 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Via facsimile: (202) 456-2710 and
Via e-mail: efoia@ceq.eop.gov

Re: Expedited FOIA Request for Records Relating to Bears Ears National Monument

Greetings:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementing regulations, 40 C.F.R. § 1515 et seq., I request the following records:

- **All records related to President Obama's designation of the Bears Ears National Monument; and**
- **All records related to the review of Bears Ears National Monument pursuant to Executive Order 13792.**

We submit this expedited records request on behalf of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council, Grand Canyon Trust, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, National Parks Conservation Association, The Wilderness Society, and the Sierra Club (collectively, "the Requesters" unless specified otherwise). An expedited response to this request is necessitated by Executive Order 13792 (Apr. 26, 2017), which requires the Secretary of the Interior to provide an interim report on his review of the Bears Ears National Monument within 45 days. Together with the report, the Secretary must provide recommendations for future action, including potential changes to the Monument's status, within 45 days. As part of that process, a **15-day public review period will commence on May 11, 2017, and end on May 26, 2017**. The requested records will aid in the public understanding and comment related to the Bears Ears National Monument review; they will be of less utility if received after the comment period closes. If it facilitates your response to this request, we are amenable to your

ROCKY MOUNTAIN 633 17TH STREET, SUITE 1600 DENVER, CO 80202

T: 303.623.9466 F: 303.623.8083 RMOFFICE@EARTHJUSTICE.ORG
WWW.EARTHJUSTICE.ORG

providing the records in batches as they are identified, as long as all the records are provided within the applicable response deadline.

For purposes of this request, “records” is consistent with the meaning of the term under FOIA. This includes, but is not limited to, documents of any kind, including electronic as well as paper documents, e-mails, writings (handwritten, typed, electronic or otherwise produced, reproduced or stored), reports, consultations, papers, studies, notes, field notes, drawings, surveys, graphs, charts, photographs, videos, meeting notes or minutes, electronic and magnetic recordings of meetings, maps, GIS layers, GPS, UTM, LiDAR, CDs, and any other compilations of data from which information can be obtained. Note that we do not seek any records that have already been published and are in the public domain.

Under FOIA, you are obligated to provide records in a readily-accessible electronic format and in the format requested. See, e.g., 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3)(B) (“In making any record available to a person under this paragraph, an agency shall provide the record in any form or format requested by the person if the record is readily reproducible by the agency in that form or format.”). We request that you provide the responsive records in electronic .pdf format without any “profiles” or “embedded files.” Please do not provide the records in a single or “batched” .pdf file. To the extent that a subset of the requested records is readily available, please provide that subset immediately while you continue to search for additional records to complete your response.

If you decide to invoke a FOIA exemption in response to this request, please include sufficient information for us to assess the basis for the exemption, including any interest(s) that would be harmed by release. Please include a detailed ledger which includes:

1. Basic factual material about each withheld record, including the originator, date, length, general subject matter, and location of each item; and
2. Complete explanations and justifications for the withholding, including the specific exemption(s) under which the record (or portion thereof) was withheld and a full explanation of how each exemption applies to the withheld material. Such statements will be helpful in deciding whether to appeal an adverse determination. Your written justification may help to avoid litigation.

In addition, if you determine that portions of the records requested are exempt from disclosure, we request that you segregate the exempt portions and mail the non-exempt portions of such records to my attention at the address below within the statutory time limit. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b).

Relevant Legal Background on the Freedom of Information Act

FOIA was designed to provide citizens a broad right to access government records. FOIA’s basic purpose is to “open agency action to the light of public scrutiny,” with a focus on the public’s “right to be informed about what their government is up to.” U.S. Dep’t of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of Press, 489 U.S. 749, 773-74 (1989) (internal quotation and

citations omitted). Congress amended FOIA with the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in Our National (OPEN) Government Act of 2007, 110 Pub. L. No. 175, 121 Stat. 2524 (to be codified at 5 U.S.C. § 552). In the Congressional findings to the OPEN Government Act, Congress found that “the American people firmly believe that our system of government must itself be governed by a presumption of openness.” 110 Pub. L. No. 175 § 2(2). In addition, Congress found that “disclosure, not secrecy, is the dominant objective of [FOIA].” *Id.* § 2(4) (quoting *Dep’t of Air Force v. Rose*, 425 U.S. 352 (1976)). Thus, under FOIA, there is a “strong presumption in favor of disclosure.” *Id.* § 2(3) (quoting *Dep’t of State v. Ray*, 502 U.S. 164 (1991)).

In a March 19, 2009 memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies, the U.S. Attorney General underscored that agencies should release records requested under FOIA even if the agency might have a technical excuse to withhold them:

First, an agency should not withhold information simply because it may do so legally. I strongly encourage agencies to make discretionary disclosures of information. An agency should not withhold records merely because it can demonstrate, as a technical matter, that the records fall within the scope of a FOIA exemption.

Second, whenever an agency determines that it cannot make full disclosure of a requested record, it must consider whether it can make partial disclosure.

Memo. of Attorney General E. Holder (March 19, 2009).

Under the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, agencies are prohibited from denying requests for information under FOIA unless the agency reasonably believes release of the information will harm an interest that is protected by the exemption. FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 (Public Law No. 114-185), codified at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A).

FEE WAIVER REQUEST

The Requesters meet the fee waiver requirements of § 552(a)(4)(A) and 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15 and therefore request that you provide the documents identified above without charge. However, if a waiver is not granted, please inform the undersigned of the cost of disclosing the above-described records if such fees exceed \$250.00.

I. Background

A requester is entitled to a fee waiver when “disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the [Federal] government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b) (CEQ regulations mirroring the FOIA standard).

In 1974, Congress amended FOIA, replacing the “arbitrary and capricious” standard of review, by which courts are required to grant deference to agencies, with the more rigorous *de novo* review standard. See § 552(a)(4)(A)(vii). The reason for this change is that Congress was concerned that agencies were using search and copying costs to prevent critical monitoring of their activities:

Indeed, experience suggests that agencies are most resistant to granting fee waivers when they suspect that the information sought may cast them in a less than flattering light or may lead to proposals to reform their practices. Yet that is precisely the type of information which the FOIA is supposed to disclose, and agencies should not be allowed to use fees as an offensive weapon against requesters seeking access to Government information

132 Cong. Rec. S14298 (Sept. 30, 1986) (Sen. Leahy).

FOIA’s amended fee waiver provision was intended specifically to facilitate access to agency records by citizen “watchdog” organizations, which utilize FOIA to monitor and mount challenges to governmental activities. See *Better Gov’t Ass’n v. Dep’t of State*, 780 F.2d 86, 88-89 (D.C. Cir. 1986). Fee waivers are essential to such groups, which

[R]ely heavily and frequently on FOIA and its fee waiver provision to conduct the investigations that are essential to the performance of certain of their primary institutional activities — publicizing governmental choices and highlighting possible abuses that otherwise might go undisputed and thus unchallenged. These investigations are the necessary prerequisites to the fundamental publicizing and mobilizing functions of these organizations. Access to information through FOIA is vital to their organizational missions

[The fee waiver] provision was added to FOIA “in an attempt to prevent government agencies from using high fees to discourage certain types of requesters and requests,” in a clear reference to requests from journalists, scholars and, most importantly for our purposes, nonprofit public interest groups.

Id. at 93-94 (quoting *Ettlinger v. FBI*, 596 F. Supp. 867, 872 (D. Mass. 1984) (emphasis added)). Thus, one of the main goals of FOIA is to promote the active oversight roles of watchdog public advocacy groups, organizations that actively challenge agency actions and policies.

Public interest fee waivers are to be “liberally construed in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters.” McClellan Ecological Seepage Situation v. Carlucci, 835 F.2d 1282, 1284 (9th Cir. 1987) (quoting 132 Cong. Rec. S14298 (Sen. Leahy)). “[T]he presumption should be that requesters in these categories are entitled to fee waivers, especially if the requesters will publish the information or otherwise make it available to the general public.” Ettlinger, 596 F. Supp. at 873 (quoting legislative history). An agency may not refuse a fee waiver when “there is nothing in the agency’s refusal of a fee waiver which indicates that furnishing the information requested cannot be considered as primarily benefiting the general public.” Id. at 874 (quoting *Fitzgibbon v. CIA*, Civ. No. 76-700 (D.D.C. Jan. 10, 1977)). “Once

the FOIA requester has made a sufficiently strong showing of meeting the public interest test of the statute, the burden, as in any FOIA proceeding, is on the agency to justify the denial of a requested fee waiver.” Id. (citing 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B)).

II. The Requesters Qualify for a Fee Waiver

The CEQ regulations implementing FOIA’s fee waiver provision, 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(1)-(6), identify six specific criteria to determine whether a fee should be waived:

- (1) Whether the subject of the requested records “specifically concerns identifiable operations or activities of the government”;
- (2) Whether the information is already in the public domain;
- (3) Whether the disclosure “would contribute to the understanding of the public-at-large as opposed to a narrow segment of the population”;
- (4) Whether the disclosure would “significantly enhance the public’s understanding” of the subject;
- (5) Whether the disclosure would further a commercial interest of the requester; and
- (6) Whether the public interest is greater than any commercial interest of the requester.

As shown below, the Requesters meet each of these factors.

A. The Records Specifically Concern the Operations or Activities of the Federal Government (40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(1)).

The Requesters seek records acquired or created by CEQ regarding the Bears Ears National Monument, which was designated pursuant to a Presidential Proclamation on December 28, 2016. The Monument includes federal public lands of national interest managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) pursuant to federal law and is the subject of an ongoing review of national monuments pursuant to Executive Order 13792.

B. The Information is Not in the Public Domain (40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(2)).

The Requesters seek records that currently remain solely in the hands of executive agencies and not disclosed to the public. On information and belief, these records include, but are not limited to, records submitted to CEQ and the White House by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture (and their constituent bureaus and agencies), and which informed former President Obama’s decision to designate the Bears Ears National Monument.

C. Disclosure is Likely to Contribute Significantly to the Understanding of a Reasonably Broad Audience of Persons Interested in the Protection of Bears Ears National Monument, Beyond the Requesters' Individual Understanding (40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(3)).

As the Ninth Circuit observed in McClellan, 835 F.2d at 1286, “[FOIA] legislative history suggests that information [has more potential to contribute to public understanding] to the degree that the information is new and supports public oversight of agency operations” Accordingly, the release of new and/or clarifying information contained in the requested records will increase the level of public understanding beyond that which existed prior to disclosure. 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(2)-(3).

The Requesters will use the records and information contained therein to better inform the public, legislators, and the organizations’ members and staff about the factors influencing the current and future management and status of Bears Ears National Monument. The numerous articles cited in the footnotes throughout this request concerning the Bears Ears National Monument attest to the broad public interest in this subject.

Once the information is made available, the Requesters will analyze it and present it to its members, online activists, and the general public in a manner that will meaningfully enhance the public’s understanding of the management, decisions, and actions regarding the Bears Ears National Monument and the objects described in the proclamation establishing the Monument. Through the Requesters’ synthesis and dissemination, disclosure of information contained and gleaned from the requested records will contribute not just to the Requesters’ understanding, but to the understanding of a broad audience of persons who are interested in the subject matter. Ettlinger, 596 F. Supp. at 876 (holding that benefit to a population group of some size distinct from the requester alone is sufficient); Carney v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice, 19 F.3d 807, 815 (2d Cir. 1994) (applying “public” to require a sufficient “breadth of benefit” beyond the requester’s own interests); Cnty. Legal Servs. v. HUD, 405 F. Supp. 2d 553, 557 (E.D. Pa. 2005) (noting, in granting fee waiver to community legal group, that while the requester’s “work by its nature is unlikely to reach a very general audience,” “there is a segment of the public that is interested in its work”); 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(3). Accordingly, the Requesters have met this prong of the fee waiver test.

Further, the Requesters will contribute significantly to the public understanding of the federal government’s decision-making process regarding the Bears Ears National Monument because the records sought are new and have not been disclosed to the public. See 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(2). The records may also confirm, clarify, or contradict documents or statements that are in the public domain and/or which have previously been released to the public. Id. Indeed, because the requested records have not been released and are not in the public domain, the public does not currently have the ability to evaluate them. See Cnty. Legal Servs., 405 F. Supp. 2d at 560 (finding that because requested records “clarify important facts” about agency policy, “the CLS request would likely shed light on information that is new to the interested public”).

D. Disclosure Would Significantly Enhance Public Understanding of the Current and Future Management of Bears Ears National Monument (40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(4)).

Public interest groups satisfy this requirement of FOIA where requestors show the “ability to understand and disseminate the information.” Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Dep’t of Justice (Judicial Watch I), 122 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10 (D.D.C. 2000). In addition, a description of past successful methods of informing the public combined with a “firm intent to disseminate” the information has been held to meet this test. Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Dep’t of Justice (Judicial Watch II), 185 F. Supp. 2d 54, 59-60 (D.D.C. 2002) (quoting Judicial Watch I, 122 F. Supp. 2d at 13). “[C]ourts have consistently overturned agency denials of fee waivers when requestors have made a legitimate, objectively supportable showing of using the requested information for scholarly research into political and historical events.” Ettlinger, 596 F. Supp. at 875; see also Weisberg v. Dep’t of Justice, 705 F.2d 1344, 1360 (D.C. Cir. 1983).

The legislative history of FOIA makes clear that the “significance” prong of the test is met where, as here, the information requested will support “public oversight of agency operations”:

A requester is likely to contribute significantly to the public understanding if the information disclosed is new; supports public oversight of agency operations; or otherwise confirms or clarifies data on past or present operations of the government.

132 Cong. Rec. H9464 (Reps. English and Kindness); see also McClellan, 835 F.2d at 1284-86.

To determine whether disclosure of requested information will contribute significantly to public understanding, a guiding test is whether the requester will disseminate the information to a reasonably-broad audience of persons interested in the subject. Carney, 19 F.3d at 807. The Requesters need not show how they intend to distribute the information, because “[n]othing in FOIA, the [agency] regulation, or our case law require[s] such pointless specificity.” Judicial Watch, 326 F.3d at 1314. It is sufficient for the requester to show how it distributes information to the public generally. Id.

The Requesters do not seek the documents for their own benefit, but seek the records to provide additional, new information to the public about CEQ records related to the Bears Ears National Monument. Disclosure will foster a better public understanding of the basis for decisions by the Obama and Trump administrations regarding current and future management of the Bears Ears National Monument, a issues which has received significant and broad public

attention in the media.¹ See 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(3) (requiring requester to show that the “disclosure will contribute to the understanding of the public-at-large as opposed to a narrow segment of the population”). The Requesters have extensive experience disseminating public records and analysis to the public, media, and decision makers; they routinely communicate with the public and the media on issues related to the protection of public lands; sites of historic, cultural, and scientific importance; and Bears Ears, specifically. As discussed below, numerous articles, press releases, and websites attesting to the Requesters’ expertise on the Bears Ears are found on the internet and on their websites. The Requesters intend to broadly disseminate the records, or summaries of the records, to the media, to their members and to the public.

More specifically, the Grand Canyon Trust, with over 4,000 members, was established in 1985 to protect and restore the Colorado Plateau. As part of its mission, it also “supports tribal communities in their efforts to protect natural and cultural resources,” including those now protected within the Bears Ears National Monument.² Portions of the Trust’s website are dedicated to informing its members and the public about Bears Ears National Monument, opportunities to learn more about the land, and opportunities for action and public input on the designation decision. It has included articles about Bears Ears in its member magazine. Executive Director Bill Hedden has penned editorials about Bears Ears in the Salt Lake Tribune,³ and his words, and those of other Trust officers, have appeared in many regional articles and publications.⁴

Great Old Broads for Wilderness, founded in 1989 with a mission of protecting wilderness and wild places for future generations, now has 36 local chapters throughout the

¹ https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/05/opinion/trump-antiquities-act-utah.html?_r=0 ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/06/opinion/sunday/will-bears-ears-be-the-next-standing-rock.html> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/climate/antiquities-act-federal-lands-donald-trump.html> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/bears-ears-is-a-national-monument-now-but-it-will-take-a-fight-to-save-it/2017/03/22/c927a35a-05a5-11e7-b9fa-ed727b644a0b_story.html?utm_term=.9b979f32e7bb ; <http://time.com/4721490/bears-ears-donald-trump-hatch/>

² <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/native-america>

³ <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/3883842-155/op-ed-tribes-involvement-would-make-bears> ; <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/4732301-155/op-ed-midnight-monument-no-utah-leaders>

⁴ <http://grandcanyontrust.nonprofitsoapbox.com/bears-ears> ; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/blog/bears-ears-needs-you> ; <http://grandcanyontrust.nonprofitsoapbox.com/protectbears> ; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/bears-ears-cultural-landscape> ; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/protecting-our-canyonlands> ; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/advocatemag/fall-winter-2016/proposed-bears-ears-national-monument> ; <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/4732301-155/op-ed-midnight-monument-no-utah-leaders> ; <http://www.hcn.org/articles/in-love-with-the-wild-thoughts-on-public-lands-in-21st-century-Escalante-Grand-Canyon-Bears-Ears-wilderness>

nation, and over 5,000 members and supporters. It organizes recreational and volunteer events in iconic wild places — including a camping trip in the Bears Ears — designed to educate the public about the history of the area and the proposed monument protections.⁵ It has voiced its support for Bears Ears as a national monument to the BLM and has issued press releases detailing opportunities for public input.⁶

Since its founding in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association has grown to a membership base of over one million. It actively informs and organizes its members and engages policy-makers to protect iconic wild lands and enhance the National Park System. It widely distributed information regarding Bears Ears and opportunities for public input on the proposed monument through its website and through public action alerts,⁷ and it has been recognized as an impassioned advocate for protecting the Bears Ears area.⁸

The Sierra Club is one of the oldest and most influential environmental organizations in the United States. Its mission includes, among other things, engaging its members and the public to protect public lands and wildlife habitat. It is a longstanding and active public advocate on behalf of public lands, national monuments, and the Bears Ears National Monument designation. It has disseminated extensive information about Bears Ears to its approximately 774,000 members and supporters, as well as to the general public through press releases, its website, published opinion pieces, and alerts to members.⁹

⁵ http://www.greatoldbroads.org/?event=bears-ears-broadwalk&event_date=2016-09-22 ;
<https://www.torreyhouse.org/single-post/2016/10/13/Bears-Ears-and-the-Great-Old-Broads>

⁶ <http://www.greatoldbroads.org/press-releases/great-old-broads-for-wilderness-joins-native-american-tribes-to-call-for-president-obama-to-designate-bears-ears-as-a-national-monument/>

⁷ <https://www.npca.org/events/136-southern-utah-conservation-public-meeting#sm.0001u1aou6r5kfpc10d7drpvkmaq5x> ;
<https://www.npca.org/articles/1437-president-preserves-iconic-canyon-country-with-bears-ears-national-monument#sm.0001u1aou6r5kfpc10d7drpvkmaq5x> ;
<https://www.npca.org/advocacy/46-one-of-our-newest-national-monuments-is-at-risk#sm.0001u1aou6r5kfpc10d7drpvkmaq5x> ;
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/with-new-monuments-in-nevada-utah-obama-adds-to-his-environmental-legacy/2016/12/28/e9833f62-c471-11e6-8422-eac61c0ef74d_story.html?utm_term=.a5031b2ba208

⁸ <http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/2016/12/bears-ears-jigsaw-piece-southeastern-utahs-national-park-landscape-declared-national>

⁹ <http://www.sierraclub.org/michael-brune/2016/07/its-time-protect-bears-ears> ;
<http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2016-4-july-august/green-life/fight-protect-bears-ears> ;
<http://www.sierraclub.org/lay-of-the-land/2017/02/stand-bears-ears> ;
<http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/green-life/antiquities-act-has-paved-way-for-some-america-s-most-awesome-national-parks-now> ; <https://sierra.secure.force.com/actions/National?actionId=AR0072730> ;
<https://medium.com/@utahsierraclub/protection-for-bears-ears-at-last-b7e2d0c03e7e> ;
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-brune/on-the-road-to-red-rock_b_7625292.html ;

Since 1983, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) has worked to protect the outstanding red rock wilderness of the American southwest and has since become Utah's most prominent environmental organization. SUWA worked with the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalitions in the campaign to create Bears Ears National Monument, and its website contains copious information about the Monument. SUWA officials have been quoted extensively regarding Bears Ears in the media.¹⁰

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an environmental nonprofit organization that is in part organized and operated to gather and publish or transmit news to the public. NRDC publishes original reporting of environmental news stories on its website, <http://www.nrdc.org>, along with blogs and staff analyses. NRDC has published multiple stories about Bears Ears on its website¹¹ and has publicized issues related to the monument on Facebook and Twitter. NRDC staff members and spokespeople have been quoted in national news coverage and have written op-eds regarding Bears Ears and the need for protections there.¹² NRDC's more than one million members and online activists constitute a large audience of people interested in the subject. And when combined with NRDC's communications to the public at large, NRDC has the capacity to reach a very broad audience. Further, NRDC has a long history of analyzing and incorporating information obtained through FOIA into reports, articles, and other communications, and it is well prepared to convey to the public any relevant information it obtains through this records request.

The Wilderness Society (TWS) is a nonprofit corporation devoted to preserving wilderness, forests, parks, rivers, deserts, and shorelands, and is committed to fostering an American land ethic. Its mission is to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. TWS's interest in obtaining the requested information is to advance TWS's understanding, and that of the public, on the nature of the Bears Ears National Monument

<http://www.climbing.com/news/in-depth-bears-ears-and-the-ongoing-battle-to-protect-us-climbing-areas/> ; <http://www.ecowatch.com/bears-ears-gold-butte-2169858371.html>

¹⁰ <https://suwa.org/issues/bears-ears/> ; <https://suwa.org/category/bears-ears/> ; <https://suwa.org/category/antiquities-act/> ; <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060037480> ; <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=42708529> ; <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865669559/A-Bears-Ears-primer-How-Obamas-pen-could-affect-southern-Utah.html> ; <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/joint-statement-draft-public-lands-initiative> ; <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/3499388-155/op-ed-ple-fails-to-protect-americas>

¹¹ <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/ancient-place-just-secured-membership-americas-culture-club> ; <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/sharon-buccino/protection-wanted-and-bears-ears-monument-delivers> ; <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2016/161228> ; <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/sharon-buccino/bears-ears-we-trust-tribally-co-managed-national-monument-offers-protection>

¹² See, e.g., <http://time.com/4454746/president-bears-ears-monument/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/04/opinion/national-monuments-tell-americas-story.html>

designation. TWS has been active in this designation for years, including asking its members and supporters to advocate for protecting the Bears Ears region.¹³ TWS has also been a spokesperson for the protection of the monument in the news media.¹⁴ As a nonprofit organization, TWS is not involved in organization or trade; TWS does not seek this information for commercial use.

As shown above, the requested records will support public oversight by allowing the public to better understand the initial decision to designate the Bears Ears National Monument, the administration's intent to implement the proclamation that established the Monument, as well as the current review process and how to engage in it. Debate and oversight of decisions regarding Bears Ears will be better informed by the release of these records, none of which have been divulged or presented to the public. See 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(2). Each of the Requesters has the expertise and capacity effectively to analyze and distribute to the interested public information contained in records responsive to this request. See 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b) (requiring disclosure not to be primarily in the commercial interest of the requester). Accordingly, they have satisfied this prong of the fee waiver test.

E. The Requesters Have No Commercial Interest in the Records.

The formal fee assessment/waiver guidelines established by the Office of Management and Budget state that:

The term “ ‘commercial use’ request” refers to a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that *furtheres the commercial, trade, or profit interests* of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made.

52 Fed. Reg. 10,012, 10,017-18 (Mar. 27, 1987) (emphasis added).

All of the Requesters are nonprofit conservation organizations which collectively have more than one million members and additional online activists dedicated to the protection of public lands, wild places, wildlife, and sites of historic and scientific significance. The Requesters have no commercial interest in the disclosure of the records and will realize no commercial benefit or profit from the disclosure of the requested records. Their requested disclosure is solely in the public's interest. See 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(6). In light of absence of commercial interest, the balancing test set forth in 40 C.F.R. § 1515.15(b)(5)-(6) is inapplicable.

¹³ <http://wilderness.org/tell-president-obama-%E2%80%9Cbears-ears%E2%80%9D-region-utah-needs-protection-drilling-mining-and-vandalism> ;
<http://wilderness.org/bears-ears%E2%80%94dont-let-special-place-be-erased> ;
<http://wilderness.org/photo-gallery-utahs-bears-ears-region-natural-cultural-treasure> ;
<http://wilderness.org/press-release/bears-ears-region-and-public-lands-initiative-time-national-monument>

¹⁴ <http://www.sltrib.com/home/4238931-155/obamas-environmental-legacy-some-24-national> ;
<http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060023763>

As demonstrated above, the Requesters meet each of the statutory and regulatory requirements for a fee waiver.

REQUEST FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING

As noted at the outset, we request expedited processing of this request pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1515.7. There is an urgent need to inform the public about the administration's ongoing review of the Bears Ears National Monument and the government records related to the Monument given the June 10, 2017 deadline by which the Secretary must provide an interim report and recommendations to the President based on his review of the Monument. See Executive Order 13792, Sec. 2(d). This creates a critical and time-sensitive need to provide the requested records to the public to facilitate broad and informed public engagement in the review and subsequent decisions concerning the Monument's future status as soon as possible.

Further, the proclamation establishing the Monument directed the BLM to initiate planning for the Monument that would protect its objects of scientific and historic importance, and the Requesters intend to participate in that process, both as members of the public and, in some cases, as members of a stakeholders' advisory group, also established by the Proclamation. Threats to the conservation of the Monument are immediate and there is an urgent need for the immediate implementation of the prescribed protective measures. The public has a right to know what information was transmitted to the White House on this topic.

The undersigned certifies that the reasons for seeking expedited review are true and correct to the best of my knowledge or belief.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response as soon as possible, but not later than 20 days, as required by law, 40 C.F.R. § 1515.6(a). Your response to the request for expedited processing is due within 10 days. 40 C.F.R. § 1515.7(d). If you have any questions about this request, please contact me at 303-996-9621.

Sincerely,



/s/Heidi McIntosh
Managing Attorney