

**Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva**

**FC Oversight Hearing — “Forgotten Voices: The Inadequate Review and Improper  
Alteration of our National Monuments”**

**Statement**

**March 13, 2019**

- **Thank you all for being here today.**
- **Today’s hearing is a long time coming. The illegal destruction of Utah’s national monuments needs scrutiny. Today this Committee is going to provide it.**
- **In 2017, President Trump and Secretary Zinke orchestrated the largest public lands protection rollback in modern American history.**
- **They stripped away protections from more than 2 million acres of our public lands.**
- **They ignored sovereign tribal nations—who had a legal right to participate in these decisions—and**

**ignored local communities while claiming to speak for them.**

- **We asked former Secretary Zinke to appear before us today.**
- **He declined to be here.**
- **We have sent document requests to Interior on how these decisions were made.**
- **Many of these requests received no response.**
- **Our information for today's hearing comes mostly from Interior's own internal investigation.**
- **We reviewed hundreds of pages of interview transcripts from Secretary Zinke and his team.**
- **My colleagues across the aisle claim these interviews clear the administration entirely.**

- **I'm sorry. They haven't done their homework.**
- **The Inspector General found from these interviews that Interior followed SOME process during this review.**
- **But the IG DID NOT consider whether this process was LEGAL, whether it was IMPROPERLY INFLUENCED, or whether it best protected public lands.**
- **If my colleagues read the full report, they would see the administration's process as hollow and improper.**
- **Industry was given special consideration.**
- **Political actors and special interests decided how our public lands were managed.**
- **The American people were ignored.**

- **Politics came before resource management, and politics came before the people's voices.**
- **The ranking member has tried to draw attention away from today's proceedings, issuing fake invitations to three former presidents to appear before this Committee.**
- **For someone who claims to love decorum, Mr. Bishop seems to have forgotten his manners, although I'm mostly concerned for the staff who were ordered to waste their time on this project.**
- **But that's not the reason we're here today. We're here because the people impacted by Trump's decision have been ignored, and it's time to listen to them, whether or not that makes some people uncomfortable.**
- **Our tribal partners, the members of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, will come before this Committee and tell us whether the administration listened to their voices.**

- **The concept of protecting Bears Ears originated with the tribes. The original boundaries were designated largely to protect tribal cultural resources.**
- **They were supposed to have a hand in managing the monument.**
- **They will tell us today if these reduced boundaries protect their spiritual resources.**
- **They can tell us whether they feel our government is fulfilling its trust responsibility to their governments.**
- **We will hear from stakeholders on the ground.**
- **We will hear from business people, council members, and Utahns, whose lives will continue to be impacted by this decision.**

- We'll hear from a scientist who can explain the crucial periods in Earth's and our nation's history that will no longer be protected.
- The administration ignored them all. They chose to listen to extractive industries and their political allies.
- That choice had consequences. Republicans on this Committee didn't want to face them. It's a shame that today is the first hearing we're holding on this issue.
- From now on, this Committee will be raising up the voices of those who haven't been heard.
- Despite what our colleagues like to think, and despite what their legislative efforts suggest, the Antiquities Act isn't broken.
- Our monuments and our public lands receive the broad support of the American people, and this

**Committee will continue to preserve our protected places.**