



## PROCLAMATION

# SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE REGION OF THE "LANDS BETWEEN"

**WHEREAS,** The Navajo Nation has a deep and sacred responsibility to protect and preserve the cultural and natural heritage of ancestral Native American lands, ensuring their integrity for future generations; and

**WHEREAS,** The region currently known as the "Lands Between" is an unprotected area in southeastern Utah, located between Bears Ears National Monument, Canyons of the Ancients, and Hovenweep National Monument, and holds immense cultural, historical, and ecological significance for the Navajo Nation and other Indigenous communities; and

**WHEREAS,** The "Lands Between" is a landscape that embodies the stories, traditions, and cultural knowledge of the Diné people, and its preservation ensures that these narratives remain an integral part of our cultural identity and legacy; and

**WHEREAS,** The area is currently threatened by various activities, including but not limited to resource extraction, conflicts with local land use, looting, vandalism, habitat destruction, and climate change, all of which endanger sacred sites, cultural resources, and ecological balance; and

**WHEREAS,** The protection of this region is essential to preserving Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which has been passed down through generations and informs sustainable land stewardship practices that are vital for maintaining the health of the land, water, and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS,** The "Lands Between" is home to diverse ecosystems, including rare and endemic plant and animal life that contribute to the region's biodiversity. Safeguarding these ecosystems will help mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote environmental sustainability; and

**WHEREAS,** The protection of this area aligns with broader conservation efforts and collaborative partnerships with other Indigenous nations, conservation organizations, and government agencies that share the commitment to preserving these lands; and

**WHEREAS,** The Navajo Nation recognizes the economic and educational opportunities that could arise from the protection of the "Lands Between," including sustainable eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and land-based educational initiatives that provide jobs, revenue, and cultural enrichment for the Diné people; and

**WHEREAS,** The establishment of permanent protections, such as designating Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), will provide consistent and culturally appropriate management strategies that emphasize conservation, uphold Indigenous consultation, and ensure the primacy of cultural and natural resource preservation; and

**WHEREAS,** The protection of the "Lands Between" is a fundamental responsibility that honors our ancestors, supports our communities, and ensures that future generations inherit a landscape that reflects the values, traditions, and spiritual connections of the Navajo Nation; and

**WHEREAS,** The Navajo Nation formally acknowledges the persistent threats to all cultural landscapes within the state of Utah, including, but not limited to, the area currently known as the "Lands Between"; and

**WHEREAS,** A more culturally appropriate name be identified for the "Lands Between," such a change shall not alter or diminish the objectives and intent of this proclamation; and

**WHEREAS,** the Navajo Nation urges federal agencies, conservation partners, and other stakeholders to recognize and support the permanent protection of the "Lands Between"; and

**NOW THEREFORE, I, DR. BUU NYGREN,** President of the Navajo Nation, hereby proclaim our Navajo Nation's support for the protection of the "Lands Between" to respect and uphold Indigenous sovereignty, cultural heritage, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that these lands remain protected for future generations.

**SO ORDERED THIS 22ND DAY OF MAY IN THE YEAR 2025.**



Dr. Buu Nygren, *President*  
The NAVAJO NATION



W. Mike Halona, *Executive Director*  
NAVAJO DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Richard M. Begay, *Manager*  
NAVAJO HERITAGE & HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT