

November 22, 2022

The Honorable Senator Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senate  
498 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Martin Heinrich  
United States Senate  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández  
United States House of Representatives  
1432 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Melanie Stansbury  
United States House of Representatives  
1421 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Chaco Cultural Heritage Protection Act**

Dear Senator Luján, Senator Heinrich, Representative Leger Fernández, and Representative Stansbury:

Thank you for leading the effort in Congress to protect the area surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Members of the undersigned groups have been working to preserve the Greater Chaco region for decades, and we celebrate your reintroduction of legislation to withdraw federal minerals within ten miles of the park boundary from future mineral development, including new oil and gas leasing. The proposed ten-mile buffer zone would prevent further degradation of the Chaco Culture UNESCO World Heritage Site and would encompass portions of the Chacoan road network, outlying Chacoan communities with great houses, and thousands of cultural, scientific, and spiritual resources.

Your actions demonstrate that you care deeply about preserving the natural and cultural resources on our public lands and that you champion the rights of indigenous communities to conserve their remaining lands, cultural properties, and sacred sites. We look forward to continuing our support of your work and to partnering with you to pass this impactful legislation. It is imperative that Congress act now to protect the irreplaceable Chaco Canyon region from the threat of oil and gas development on federal land.

Thank you again for your excellent work.

Respectfully,

Paul Reed  
Preservation Archeologist  
Archaeology Southwest  
[preed@archaeologysouthwest.org](mailto:preed@archaeologysouthwest.org)

Romir Lahiri  
New Mexico Associate Program Director  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
[romir@conservationlands.org](mailto:romir@conservationlands.org)

Ellen Montgomery  
Public Lands Campaign Director  
Environment America  
[lmontgomery@environmentnewmexico.org](mailto:lmontgomery@environmentnewmexico.org)

Virginia Carter  
Conservation Associate  
Environment New Mexico  
[vcarter@environmentnewmexico.org](mailto:vcarter@environmentnewmexico.org)

Max Trujillo  
Senior Field Coordinator  
HECHO  
[max@hechoonline.org](mailto:max@hechoonline.org)

Lauren Cohen  
Associate Director of Government Relations  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
[lcohen@savingplaces.org](mailto:lcohen@savingplaces.org)

Emily Wolf  
New Mexico Senior Program Coordinator  
National Parks Conservation Association  
[ewolf@npca.org](mailto:ewolf@npca.org)

Mark Allison  
Executive Director  
New Mexico Wild  
[mark@nmwild.org](mailto:mark@nmwild.org)

Michael Casaus  
New Mexico State Director  
The Wilderness Society  
[michael\\_casaus@twc.org](mailto:michael_casaus@twc.org)