



## Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition

HOPI TRIBE · NAVAJO NATION · SOUTHERN PAIUTE  
UTE MOUNTAIN UTE · ZUNI TRIBE

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### Inter-Tribal Coalition Members Pleased that a U.S. Senate Vote Deadline Threatening Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's 2025 Management Plan has Passed

ESCALANTE, UT – Members of the [Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition](#) are gratified that the U.S. Senate failed to act on a bill ([S.J.RES. 109](#)) before a June 11, 2026 deadline that would have required only a simple majority vote to overturn Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's protective 2025 management plan.

Though a vote on [H.J.RES. 151](#) in the House of Representatives and the Senate may still occur in the future, from today forward, [S.J.RES. 109](#) requires 60 votes to overcome the Senate filibuster, making the measure very unlikely to become law.

Joining the Inter-Tribal Coalition in opposition to using the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to threaten Grand Staircase-Escalante and representing hundreds of Tribes nationwide, [the National Congress of American Indians also opposes](#) the use of the CRA to disapprove the 2025 monument management plan.

“We celebrate with gratitude today that Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's 2025 management plan still stands. That plan, for the first time, heeded our voices and our Traditional Knowledge by establishing a framework for Tribal co-stewardship over our ancestral lands,” said **Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition Coordinator Autumn Gillard, Southern Paiute**. “Overturning Grand Staircase-Escalante's management plan using the Congressional Review Act would have been a direct strike against the Federal government's duty to consult with Tribes. Grand Staircase's resource management plan protects cultural places, petroglyphs, pictographs, and structures. These places are still important for traditions, ceremonies, and domestic life.”

“Removing the plan would have created a greater risk of looting, vandalism, graffiti, and degradation. Tribes are the original stewards of these lands, and we are thankful that our voices will still be consulted as such,” **Gillard added.**

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument’s 2025 management plan includes a Tribal co-stewardship framework, honors legally required Tribal consultation, and recognizes the important government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the U.S. government. The monument’s management plan protects our ancestral lands and cultural places, as well as fossils, wildlife, endangered plants, and lifegiving water sources for all Americans to enjoy inside the monument. Undoing it would have devastating effects for the monument and for our peoples.

“We are thankful today as the original stewards and managers of the Grand Staircase-Escalante natural landscape – above and below,” said **Georgie Pongyesva, Hopi.** “Our holistic cultural connections are not bound to borders – they are braided together by the waters that flow from the Escalante River to the Colorado River.”

“We have spent years working toward establishing a co-stewardship framework that allows us to enact our Traditional Knowledge to help heal the land, plants, animals, and precious waters at Grand Staircase-Escalante,” **Pongyesva** further stated.

If the joint resolutions pass Congress and are signed into law by the President, it will represent the first time Congress has used the Congressional Review Act to undo a national monument’s management plan. This action would nullify the important work of Tribal consultation, as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and circumvent the historic government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the U.S. federal government. Passage would further set a chilling precedent for other national monuments across the nation, making it harder for Tribes to participate in protecting our ancestral lands, and harder for the public to make their voices heard in decisions about how to manage important natural and cultural landscapes.

“If critics believe parts of the Grand Staircase plan should be changed, they should say which parts and why,” said **Erik Stanfield, an anthropologist with the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department.** “They should make that case in public. They should not pretend the process never happened. They should not use an obscure Congressional procedure to erase years of work because the final compromise did not tilt far enough in their favor.”

Our Tribes participated in an [in-depth consultation process](#), offering our traditional knowledge about stewarding the monument as the plan was being created. The monument’s management

plan was finalized in [January 2025](#) after a two-year public process, during which thousands of Americans participated by offering input that helped inform the plan.

"As a Diné woman, I speak from my perspective and from the teachings of Hózhó, which call us to live in balance and to care for the land in a good way. Grand Staircase-Escalante is a living ancestral homeland, and our responsibility to protect it comes from the teachings passed down by our ancestors long before any federal designation. We, too, as Navajo people, have ancestral homes and cultural connections within this landscape," said **Davina Smith-Idjesa, Grand Staircase Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition Navajo Representative**. "I also support in respect and solidarity with our other Tribal Nations whose sacred ancestral homelands, petroglyphs, pictographs, and ancestral places are rooted here."

"We as an Inter-Tribal Coalition remain committed to advocating to ensure these lands are protected for future generations. This is about honoring our ancestors, safeguarding living culture, and carrying our shared responsibility as Indigenous caretakers," **Smith-Idjesa** continued.

Should future votes occur in the House of Representatives or the Senate, the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition calls on all U.S. representatives to protect Grand Staircase-Escalante and vote NO on [S.J.RES. 109](#) and [H.J.RES. 151](#).

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## BACKGROUND

On January 15, 2026, the U.S. Government Accountability Office [determined](#) that Grand Staircase-Escalante's management plan qualifies as a "rule" under a little-known law called the [Congressional Review Act](#) (CRA).

Under the CRA, Utah politicians on March 4, 2026 introduced joint "resolutions of disapproval" in the [House](#) and [Senate](#) asking Congress to toss out Grand Staircase-Escalante's management plan. If passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President, any future management plan would have to be substantially different, potentially nullifying the monument's existing Tribal co-stewardship framework. While this would not change the monument's boundaries, it would hurt the monument and place our ancestral lands and cultural places at risk.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was designated in 1996 under the Antiquities Act and it now protects almost 1.9 million acres in southern Utah, including slot canyons and stone arches, dinosaur fossils, and cultural and archaeological places of profound importance to Tribes, including sacred petroglyph panels and culturally significant plants that our people continue to gather for food and for ceremony today. As Native peoples, we have interacted with the Grand Staircase-Escalante landscape traditionally and ceremonially, as well as

domestically, since time immemorial. We are still here, connected to and defending these lands today.

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*The Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition, which includes the Hopi Tribe, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, the Navajo Nation, the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Zuni Tribe, advocates for Grand-Staircase-Escalante National Monument, for Tribal voices and perspectives to be heard and included in the management of the monument, and for protecting the monument for all Americans to appreciate and enjoy.*