

September 19th, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Together, 100 organizations representing millions of members and supporters across the country join the Indigenous leaders and nations, state and local governments, conservation organizations, outdoor recreationists, small businesses, artists, and advocates urging you to designate Avi Kwa Ame as a national monument.

The proposed Avi Kwa Ame national monument spans nearly 450,000 acres between the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Nevada-California state border. These lands feature dramatic peaks, scenic canyons, natural springs, sloping bajadas covered with ancient Joshua tree forests, unique grasslands, and a rich history of rock art and other cultural sites. The cultural, natural, recreational, and historic resources and values throughout this incredible southern Nevada landscape need stronger, permanent protections.

Avi Kwa Ame roughly translates from Mojave to Spirit Mountain and the surrounding landscape, and it is full of cultural resources and values. Spirit Mountain is designated a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its religious and cultural importance.

The area is considered sacred to ten Yuman speaking tribes—the Mojave, Hualapai, Yavapai, Havasupai, Quechan, Maricopa, Pai Pai, Cocopah, Halchidhoma and Kumeyaay—as well as the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute. It contains areas of sacred and ritual importance associated with creation, cosmology, and well-being. The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, which serves as caretaker of the mountain and surrounding landscapes on behalf of the other Yuman tribes, notes “the physical network of Mojave trails and cultural sites and the corresponding Mojave Bird Songs and Creation Stories links their tribe and religious traditions.”

The proposed monument contains many natural resources as well including some of the most visually stunning, biologically diverse lands in the Mojave Desert. It forms the eastern end of the world’s largest Joshua tree forest. The area is home to some of the oldest and largest Joshua trees on the planet, some rising to more than 30 feet over 900 years.

It is also home to rare and threatened wildlife such as the Mojave Desert tortoise and desert bighorn sheep, and it serves as an important migratory corridor for desert bighorn sheep. A herd of desert bighorn sheep lives on the steep, rocky slopes of the Castle Mountains and the New York Mountains, and the Highland Range, part of the monument, is set aside as a crucial bighorn habitat area. The area has been designated by Audubon as an “Important Birding Area” because it is important for migratory birds due to its proximity to foraging habitat, nesting habitat, and the Colorado River, one of the most significant features in the Pacific Flyway. Designating the area as a monument would help protect the land and preserve these essential habitats.

Avi Kwa Ame is a recreationists’ wonderland where people can experience the great outdoors, on trails for hiking, hunting, birding, riding off-highway vehicles, and stargazing. The outdoor recreation industry plays a vital role in Nevada’s economy, ranking third in the jobs sustained in the state. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, the outdoor recreation economy creates 87,000 jobs and generates \$12.6 billion in consumer spending in that state. Designating Avi Kwa Ame as a national monument would provide more opportunities for people to enjoy outdoor spaces.

The proposed monument also includes many historical values and resources, such as petroglyphs, mining, and pioneer-era artifacts, and Walking Box Ranch, the home of 1930s-era film stars Rex Bell and Clara Bow.

The local governments and business organizations in gateway communities also support the monument proposal, including the Searchlight Town Advisory Board, the Boulder City Council, the Laughlin Town Advisory Board, the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce, the Laughlin Chamber of Commerce, and the Laughlin Tourism Commission. Additionally, in 2021, the Nevada Legislature passed Assembly Joint Resolution No. 3 in support of protecting 30 percent of the lands and waters of the United States by 2030 and designating Avi Kwa Ame as a national monument.

Signed,

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Amah Mutsun Tribal Band

Amargosa Conservancy

American Sustainable Business Network

Azul
Basin and Range Watch
Battle Born Progress – Nevada
Bold Alliance
Businesses for Conservation and Climate Action
California Environmental Voters
Californians for Western Wilderness
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chispa AZ
Chispa LCV
Chispa NV
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservation Minnesota
Conservation Voters for Idaho
Conservation Voters New Mexico
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Defenders of Wildlife
Dolores River Boating Advocates
EarthKeepers 360
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environmental Action
Fifth Sun Project
Fort Ord Recreational Trails (FORT) Friends
Friends and Neighbors of the Deschutes Canyon Area
Friends of AZ Joshua Tree Forest
Friends of Browns Canyon
Friends of Gold Butte

Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Plumas Wilderness
Friends of Red Rock Canyon
Friends of Sloan Canyon
Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument
Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
Friends of the Owyhee
Friends of the San Pedro River Inc.
Friends of the Yampa
Friends of Walking Box Ranch
Get Outdoors Nevada
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Hispanic Access Foundation
Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO)
Inland Ocean Coalition
Institute for a Progressive Nevada
Las Vegas Astronomical Society
Las Vegas DSA
Latino Outdoors
League of Conservation Voters
Loxahatchee River Historical Society / Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum
Mojave Desert Land Trust
Mormon Women for Ethical Government Nevada Chapter
National Audubon Society

National Ocean Protection Coalition
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Native American Land Conservancy
Native Voter Alliance Nevada
Nevada Conservation League
Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition
Nevada Plants
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project
One APIA Nevada
Outdoor Afro
Patagonia
Protectors of Tule Springs
Red Rock Audubon Society
Sequent Management Group
Sierra Club
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Solidarity Fridge
Somos Votantes
Symbiotic
The Chaparral Lands Conservancy
The Mountain Pact
The Nature Conservancy
The Ocean Project
The Pew Charitable Trusts
The Wilderness Society

Trust for Public Land

Tuleyome

Vet Voice Foundation

Virginia League of Conservation Voters

Waterway Advocates, Inc.

Western Leaders Network

Western Resource Advocates

Western Watersheds Project

Wildlands Network

CC: The Honorable Debra Haaland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, White House Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Jacky Rosen, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Dina Titus, U.S. House of Representative
The Honorable Susie Lee, U.S. House of Representative
The Honorable Steven Horsford, U.S. House of Representative