

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

As we work to provide permanent protection to the greater Chaco region through legislative action, including the *Chaco Canyon Cultural Heritage Protection Act*, we request that you pursue an administrative withdrawal from mineral development, including federal oil and gas leasing within the Chaco Culture Heritage Withdrawal Area.

New Mexico's Chaco Canyon is one of the most important cultural and historical areas in the United States and the world. Chaco Canyon is home to ancient dwellings, artifacts, and sacred sites. However, drilling and extraction have threatened the sacred, ancestral homelands within the greater Chaco region, putting this treasured landscape at risk of desecration. Chaco Canyon remains an area with religious and cultural significance to the Pueblo Indian Tribes, Navajo Nation, and other Tribal Nations and Native communities. There have been numerous short-term protections granted to the region, but an administrative withdrawal will provide long-term certainty while we work to permanently protect the greater Chaco area and address the environmental, health, economic, and cultural needs of this region.

We appreciate your focus on this issue and look forward to working with you on securing permanent protections for the greater Chaco region.

Sincerely,



/r/ MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator

BEN RAY LUJÁN  
United States Senator



TERESA LEGER FERNÁNDEZ  
Member of Congress