

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2019

Hon. Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Joe Manchin  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
306 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

We respectfully request that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee consider marking up S. 1079, the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act, during its next business meeting.

By establishing the Proposed Chaco Protection Zone, this bill will protect a sacred and fragile landscape from further development, without impacting existing operations, including those of Indian Tribes and allottees within the zone.

Since the Committee held its hearing on this bill, Secretary Bernhardt visited this national treasure with Senator Heinrich. There, the Secretary noted that he “walked away with a greater sense of appreciation of the magnificent site managed by the National Park Service and a better understanding of tribal leaders’ views of its cultural significance.” Interior has now updated its testimony on this legislation as a result of that visit, and further clarified that it has “no objection” to this legislation. We have attached for your consideration the Secretary’s letter to the House Natural Resources Committee in which the Department sets forth this position.

While we welcome the Department’s recent commitment to forgo leasing in the areas covered by this bill for one year, the length of that commitment only underscores that permanent protection by legislation is needed. We therefore ask that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee include this bill in the committee’s next business meeting.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator