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NUTRITION

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3101**

October 5, 2018

Honorable Secretary Ryan Zinke  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

Chaco Canyon is home to countless sacred sites and artifacts that reflect the culture and ancestry of the native people who have lived in this area. Many of these archeological and cultural resources extend well beyond the 10 mile protection zone around Chaco Culture National Historical Park, including in areas that are currently being considered for lease sale. Further, many of these cultural resources may have never been discovered or catalogued.

I remain concerned that if BLM does not take the necessary precautions, important archeological and cultural resources in the area could be damaged and destroyed by hasty development. As you consult with stakeholders on finding a balance among oil and gas exploration, environmental protection, and cultural resource protection, I urge you to suspend the planned December, 2018 lease sale until a comprehensive cultural resource study can be completed in coordination with impacted tribes.

Lastly, I urge you to maintain the 10 mile protection zone around Chaco Culture National Historical Park and to not include it in any future lease sales. This zone should be permanently protected from oil and gas development to safeguard both the archeological sites of ancient civilizations in the area and present day communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to your reply on whether you will delay the December lease sale and what you are doing to work with tribal stakeholders on protecting cultural resources in the area.

Sincerely,



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress