

MONTH XX, 2022

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

Dear Mr. President,

Together, XX 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 to 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 star-gazing. 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 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,

[GROUPS]

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