



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

August 26, 2016

Secretary Sally Jewell
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Daniel M. Ashe, Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell and Director Ashe,

The Navajo Nation ("Nation") reaffirms its opposition to the delisting from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of the grizzly bear in the Yellowstone region, and remains in solidarity with the now fifty-plus federally recognized Indian tribes, which stand in opposition to this policy. We are concerned that the grizzly bear is now even closer to losing its ESA status and being in the crosshairs of trophy hunters.

The Navajo Nation requests an immediate moratorium to be instituted and the Fish and Wildlife Department immediately hold meaningful tribal consultations on grizzly bear management plans. The current grizzly bear management plans are largely crafted by the states, and tribes are being placed in a position where they have to accept and adopt these state agendas. Tribal nations must be included in this process, and their inclusion facilitated by the federal government, in the formulation of grizzly bear management plans, in order that those plans reflect the cultural imperatives of those tribes, and provide for possible economic opportunities through eco-tourism. Furthermore, tribes should be supported in developing their own grizzly bear management programs that employ qualified tribal members.


It is very troubling to see the influence of corporate energy companies on this delisting decision. Engaging a multinational oil and gas services company, Amec Foster Wheeler, to be responsible for the peer review process of the grizzly delisting rule raises serious questions. A former Halliburton executive now runs this company, and much of the information relative to corporate energy company connections to this issue has only been revealed through the filing of Freedom of Information Act requests.

To the least the Navajo Nation request for a government to government consultation on this matter. Please contact Fran Johnson at (928) 871-7000 or fjohnson@navajo-nsn.gov to schedule such meeting.

Respectfully,

THE NAVAJO NATION


Russell Begaye, *President*


Jonathan M. Nez, *Vice President*