

# Trump: national monuments a 'massive federal land grab'

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed an executive order Wednesday directing his interior secretary to review the designation of dozens of national monuments on federal lands, calling the protection efforts “a massive federal land grab” by previous administrations.

It was yet another executive action from a president trying to rack up accomplishments before his first 100 days in office, with Saturday marking that milestone. And it could upend protections put in place in Utah and other states under a 1906 law that authorizes the president to declare federal lands as monuments and restrict their use.

During a signing ceremony at the Interior Department, Trump said the order would end “another egregious abuse of federal power” and “give that power back to the states and to the people where it belongs.”

Trump accused the Obama administration of using the Antiquities Act to “unilaterally put millions of acres of land and water under strict federal control” — a practice Trump derided as “a massive federal land grab.”

“Somewhere along the way the Act has become a tool of political advocacy rather than public interest,” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said. “And it’s easy to see why designations in some cases are viewed negatively by those local communities that are impacted the most.”

In December, shortly before leaving office, President Barack Obama infuriated Utah Republicans by creating the Bears Ears National Monument on more than 1 million acres of land that’s sacred to Native Americans and home to tens of thousands of archaeological sites, including ancient cliff dwellings.

Republicans in the state asked Trump to take the unusual step of reversing Obama’s decision. They said the designation will stymie growth by closing the area to new commercial and energy development. The Antiquities Act does not give the president explicit power to undo a designation and no president has ever taken such a step.

Trump’s order was one of a handful he intended to sign this week in a flurry of developments before his 100th day in office. The president has used executive orders aggressively over the past three months; as a candidate, Trump railed against Obama’s use of this power.

Wednesday’s order will cover



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster  
President Donald Trump speaks at the Interior Department in Washington, Wednesday, before signing an Antiquities Executive Order.

## Western monuments under review:

- Hanford Reach National Monument, Washington
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah
- Bears Ears National Monument, Utah

several dozen monuments across the country designated since 1996. They total 100,000 acres or more and include the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Bear Ears, both in Utah.

Zinke was directed to produce an interim report in 45 days and make a recommendation on Bears Ears, and then issue a final report within 120 days.

Zinke said that over the past 20 years, the designation of tens of millions of acres as national monuments have limited the lands’ use for farming, timber harvesting, mining and oil and gas exploration, and other commercial purposes.

While designations have done “a great service to the public,” Zinke said the “local community affected should have a voice.”

Some, including Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, have hailed the order as the end of “land grabs” by presidents dating to Bill Clinton.

But Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., said that if Trump truly wants to make America great again, he should use the

law to protect and conserve America’s public lands. In New Mexico, Obama’s designation of Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument have preserved important lands while boosting the economy, Heinrich said, and that story has repeated across the country.

“If this sweeping review is an excuse to cut out the public and scale back protections, I think this president is going to find a very resistant public,” Heinrich said.

Members of a coalition of five Western tribes that pushed for the Bears Ears National Monument said they’re outraged the administration will review a decision they say was already carefully vetted by the Obama administration, including a multi-day visit last summer by then-Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

Davis Filfred, the Navajo Nation representative on the coalition, said it would be heart-breaking if the review leads to an attempt to strip the monument of designation.

“Once it’s designated, it’s designated. He should just honor our past leaders and those who were before him,” Filfred said. “He’s disregarding the Native Americans, the first people of this nation. This is sacred land.”

Filfred said he and the coalition won’t stand by idly if Zinke tries to undo the designation. “He’s going to be in for a fight. We’re not going to let this down easy.”

# Trump tax plan could be good news for many, bad for deficit

By JOSH BOAK and STEPHEN OHLEMACHER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dismissing concerns about ballooning federal deficits, President Donald Trump on Wednesday proposed dramatic tax cuts for U.S. businesses and individuals — outlining an overhaul his administration promises will spur economic growth and simplify America’s tangle of tax code rules.

His proposal, a one-page sketch short on detail, would reduce the top corporate tax rate by 20 percentage points and allow private business owners to claim the new lower rate for their take-home pay. It would whittle the number of tax brackets for individuals from seven to three, lower the top tax rate from 39.6 percent to 35 percent and double the standard amount taxpayers could deduct.

It would eliminate the estate tax and reduce taxes on investments, typically paid by the rich. It would further reduce the tax burden for the wealthy by eliminating the catch-all alternative minimum tax, which takes an additional bite out of high-income Americans.

More lower-income Americans would pay no tax at all, and there would be relief — still undefined — for families with child care expenses.

The plan does not propose any budget cuts or tax increases that might offset the lost revenue, a choice that alarms some fiscal conservatives in Trump’s party who have spent years railing about

the dangers of deficit spending.

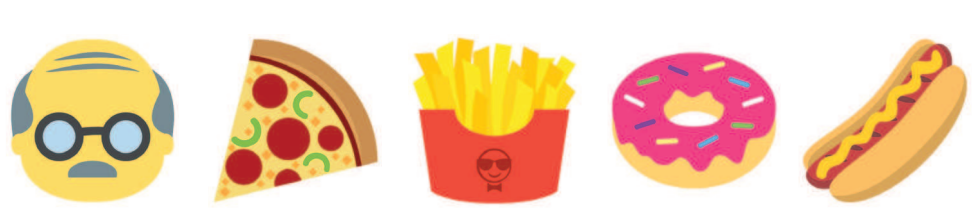

It also does not fully embrace tax proposals backed by Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan, an essential ally if the president is to make good on his promise to deliver a tax overhaul that creates growth and brings jobs to struggling parts of the country.

Still, “I would never, ever bet against this president. He will get this done for the American people,” said Gary Cohn, director of the White House National Economic Council. “He understands that there are a lot of people who work hard and feel like they’re not getting ahead.”

The president’s proposal marks a rehash of an economic theory popularized in the 1980s. Trump officials essentially argue that benefits from the tax cuts will trickle down from higher profits for companies into stronger pay raises for workers and greater consumer spending. This expected surge in growth, in theory, would be enough to keep the federal budget deficit from shooting upward.


Some economists agree, but most budget experts say it’s unlikely.

“Unfortunately, it seems the administration is using economic growth like magic beans — the cheap solution to all our problems,” said Maya MacGuineas, president of the non-partisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. “But there is no golden goose at the top of the tax cut beanstalk, just mountains of debt.”

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