



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COFEM ATTENDS A LISTENING SESSION HOSTED BY THE UNITED STATES
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, DEB HAALAND**

Coachella, CA (May 23, 2024)—Last Saturday, May 18, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland visited the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and hosted a listening session. This session was a testament to the importance of Tribal Nations, community leaders, local elected officials, veterans, and our youth as their perspectives and insights were sought to understand why permanently protecting this landscape is crucial to the local community.

It is a moment of great pride for us to have our conservation program manager attend the listening session and personally deliver all the support letters and resolutions. These documents represent the collective support for this initiative from over 140,000 individual supporters across the country, seven local cities, five Chambers of Commerce, and more than 100 local businesses. This is a testament to the widespread recognition of the importance of this initiative, one that would designate approximately 620,000 acres of public land as the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expand Joshua Tree National Park by about approximately 17,000 acres.

In response, Sendy Hernández Orellana Barrows, Conservation Program Manager, Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM), released the following statement.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and other Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management staff members, we are profoundly grateful for your visit to the Coachella Valley and the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. Your listening session with Tribal Nations, community leaders, local elected officials, veterans, and our youth was a pivotal moment. COFEM is deeply honored to have been among the voices advocating for the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park expansion. We continue to urge President Biden to designate these areas through

the Antiquities Act, a crucial step towards California's 30x30 objectives and commitments that will have a significant impact on our environment and community.

About COFEM:

The mission of the Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM) is to empower immigrant communities to be full participants in the social, political, economic, and cultural life of the United States and their home country. We accomplish this work by uniting, strengthening, and expanding our member organizations to better advocate, preserve, and share their cultural traditions and help improve the lives of families and friends in their country of origin.

We envision a fair and inclusive America where immigrant communities have a voice, access to the Citizenship process, and the ability to preserve their cultural identity.

Learn more about COFEM by visiting www.cofem.org