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Press Contact: Amairani Perez Chamu, Media Strategist

amairani@netacollab.com | (918) 313-5365

MONUMENTAL SHIFT APPLAUDS BIDEN ADMINISTRATION PROTECTION OF AVI KWA AME

NATIONAL - Avi Kwa Ame, the sacred home and culturally significant land to many Indigenous tribes will now be permanently protected. Monumental Shift applauds the National Monument designation for Avi Kwa Ame as one of many National Monuments to be established to continue the pursuit of a more inclusive, equitable outdoors for all. For centuries, Native Americans have made pilgrimages to the 5,600-foot-high monolith Avi Kwa Ame, or “Spirit Mountain,” to seek religious visions and give thanks for Earth’s bounty. Home to over 443,000 acres of public and sacred lands, The Mojave, Hopi and Chemehuevi Southern Paiutes still return to the Mountain to help the spirits of deceased loved ones navigate the landscape that exists in both the natural and supernatural worlds. Bennae Calac, Executive Director & Founder of 7G Foundation states “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.”

Conservation groups and community organizers in Nevada and across the nation celebrate this decision with hope that 62,371 acres within the proposed monument boundary that previously had no special protective designations and were vulnerable to mining operations and large-scale wind and solar energy projects, will now be off-hands for those seeking to make profit in the Mountains. Situated in the Mojave Desert, Avi Kwa Ame is sacred land of ancient Joshua Tree forests and dramatic desert terrain, and it is the ecological “connective tissue” binding protected lands in the region like Mojave National Preserve and Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

"We are pleased that President Biden and the Administration have listened to the request for the urgent protection of Avi Kwa Ame, supported by the Fort Mojave Tribe, local lawmakers, sports-men and women, and the Hispanic community, among many others," said Camilla Simon, executive director of HECHO. "This area is sacred to Indigenous Peoples and is vulnerable to energy development proposals. Protecting Avi Kwa Ame means honoring that sacred connection, and choosing a future that values the protection of land, water, wildlife, history, and culture."

The decision to give Avi Kwa Ame a National Monument designation helps safeguard these wildlands and will allow species to adapt, endure, and hopefully survive amid the pressures of climate change.

[Monumental SHIFT](#) is a coalition rooted in racially and ethnically diverse leadership transforming the traditional creation, conception, funding, and stewardship of national monuments in the United States in order to better represent and honor lands and places sacred to the communities which we belong to.



Shan Lewis, Vice Chairman of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
President, Inter Tribal Association of Arizona:

- “Avi Kwa Ame is significantly an important part of our community as it is where our tribal creation story begins. Its protection is the equivalent to protecting the existence of the Mojave people and culture itself. This fight for protection has been a priority of our people for generations. As leaders we carry the honor of fighting for the right to protect that which is most sacred to the Mojave people. To be able to offer protection under the status of a monument now not only protects this sacred area but shares it with others in a respectable way.”

Colleen Garcia, Fort Mojave Tribal Councilwoman

“I am a full-blood Aha Macav (Mojave). I am of the Neolge clan which is the Fire/Sun clan. I live in Needles, CA. (aha kuloh, where the water bends) and I come from Avi Kwa Ame/Spirit Mountain.”

- “Avi Kwa Ame or Spirit Mountain is of utmost importance to our Community because it is a sacred place where we believe our God Matevilye, his younger brother Mastamho and the original people lived. The original people left images and stories through petroglyphs on the rocks at Avi Kwa Ame. Mastamho brought life to the world, as we know it now, by creating all living things: animals, birds, the river, vegetation, etc. Avi Kwa Ame has a physical and spiritual connection to our Community. Conceptually, Avi Kwa Ame is comparable to Christianity’s most sacred and holy places.”
- “For me, personally, Avi Kwa Ame is where my origin began, my roots. I am a traditional Aha Macav (Mojave) elder whose ancestors were the original people who lived at Avi Kwa Ame in the beginning of life on earth. Avi Kwa Ame is the origin of my life yesterday, today and tomorrow. I am connected to Avi Kwa Ame physically and spiritually.”

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