WESTERN LEADERS NETWORK BOARD VICE-CHAIR REGINA LOPEZ-WHITESKUNK
ISSUES STATEMENT ON ZINKE’S BEARS EARS REPORT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 12, 2017
CONTACT: Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, Western Leaders Network Vice-Chair,
n8tiveutegal@gmail.com
Jessica Pace, Program Coordinator, jess@westernleaders.org
Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director, gwen@westernleaders.org

“I am appalled that Secretary Zinke wants to reduce Bears Ears National Monument on the
grounds that he didn’t see cultural significance in all areas protected by monument status. The
whole region is deserving of protection for the next seven generations, and not just for Native
Americans – for everybody.

“Secretary Zinke’s statements are an insult to the work of tribal leadership and the Department of
the Interior under the Obama administration. That work was based on science, based on the
legalities of how that land can be protected, and based on the traditional knowledge of tribal
people.

“Secretary Zinke’s statements appear very politically motivated in the favor of Utah delegates.
The conclusions in his report do not seem objective. As he visited Utah, he did not give tribes
and other voices the same opportunities he afforded the Utah delegation, governor and state
legislators. It is, for me, a slap in the face.

“This news devalues science, the work of the legal community and tribes. It is extremely
disturbing to know that recent polls showed that Utah citizens, specifically, support leaving the
monument intact. If the administration’s concern was that they did not receive feedback from the
people of Utah, whose interests are they representing now? Reducing Bears Ears is something
that forever sets a negative precedent for future public lands conversations.”