



◆ 827 North Main ◆ Cottonwood, AZ ◆ 86326  
Phone: 928-634-4112 ◆ E-mail: mayor@dianejoens.com

**Diane Joens**

*Office of the Mayor of Cottonwood*

---

March 25, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)  
Comments

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing in support of Alternative B, the proposal to withdraw approximately one million acres of federal lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park from uranium mining for 20 years.

As Mayor of Cottonwood, I am concerned about the impacts uranium mining could have on the regional economy and the environment surrounding the Canyon if mining is permitted. Cottonwood is located in the Verde Valley and tourism is a mainstay of our local economy. Arizona is the Grand Canyon state and visitation to the Canyon is the primary economic engine in our region as well as the state. Grand Canyon visitation generates more than \$687 million in annual revenues and provides 12,000 full-time tourism-related jobs in northern Arizona.

If the proposed 20-year ban is not adopted, the DEIS predicts that thirty new uranium mines will begin operating as proposed under the No Action Alternative A. I am concerned about the impact on tourism if dozens of new mines were to open and that the associated power lines, truck traffic, road building, dust, noise and other industrialization around the Grand Canyon will diminish the natural experience that most of the five million visitors seek each year. Anything that could have a detrimental effect on tourism could be devastating to our local economy.

Arizona has a long history with mining and Cottonwood and the Verde Valley are no exception. In Cottonwood and the surrounding communities we have experienced the boom and bust cycles of copper mining. In our community, the cleanup of slag piles from copper mining and smelter operations is ongoing. We know first-hand the financial burdens and public health issues associated with remediation of closed and abandoned mine sites and milling operations.

I understand the role mining has in supplying the minerals utilized in the production of modern technology and goods that are used daily. However, I believe in this case uranium mining around the Canyon is not worth the risk. The withdrawal is limited to three parcels totaling 1,010,776 acres of public lands. The industry has access to uranium ore outside of the withdrawal areas in Arizona, as well as other domestic supplies in Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. The DEIS states "uranium mined and produced within the parcels would not necessarily move the United States toward energy independence and thus would not represent an impact to national energy resources".

The potential contamination of the seeps, springs and creeks that drain into the Grand Canyon National Park and flow into the Colorado River is a real concern. Communities across northern Arizona are working diligently to augment and protect their water resources. Arizona has a long history of preserving and protecting its Colorado River allocation. Any action that could potential jeopardize that supply through possible contamination seems shortsighted and ill-advised.

I am also concerned about the potential negative effects that uranium mining will have on wildlife habitat, biological diversity and human health.

The need to diversify our economic base is clearly understood. However, the challenge is identifying an industry that will compliment or at a minimum will not harm the current economic base. From an economic standpoint, the potential economic benefits that would be derived from uranium mining in northern Arizona are insignificant when compared to the benefits derived from tourism, which will be put at risk if the region is industrialized.

The Grand Canyon is a World Heritage site. It must be preserved and protected for future generations. I urge you to support the full 20-year withdrawal of more than one million acres from new mining claims around the Grand Canyon. Furthermore, I ask that action be taken prior to July 20, 2011, so that there is no delay between the current segregation order. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Joens". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mayor Diane Joens

cc: Mr. Scott Florence  
District Manager  
Bureau of Land Management Arizona Strip District Office  
345 East Riverside Drive  
St. George, UT 84790  
[NAZproposedwithdrawal@azblm.org](mailto:NAZproposedwithdrawal@azblm.org)