



April 4, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Arizona Tourism Alliance expresses our strong support of your proposal for a 20-year ban on new uranium mining claims on more than one million acres of public lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. The Grand Canyon is a World Heritage site and Arizona's preeminent attraction for both international and domestic visitors. It is also a critical driver for the Arizona economy. Visitation to the Grand Canyon generates more than \$687 million annually in direct, indirect, and induced revenues, and provides the foundation for more than 290,000 statewide tourism-related jobs, and 12,000 full-time tourism-related jobs in northern Arizona.

As tourism professionals who understand the importance of the Grand Canyon to our entire state, we know with certainty that uranium mining is not a compatible use in this extraordinary landscape. If the ban is lifted, the Grand Canyon will be irreparably compromised as dozens of new mines will go into operation with their attendant power lines and the supporting infrastructure necessary to support that industry. In addition to the physical mines, increased truck traffic, road building, dust, and other industrialization will all work to diminish the natural experience that the four million visitors to the Canyon seek each year.

In addition to the degradation of the visitor experience at the Grand Canyon, mining presents serious risks to the watershed and to the land. The National Park Service recently spent \$15 million to remove mining equipment and contaminated soil from an abandoned uranium mine located on the Grand Canyon's South Rim. The agency has yet to address the subsurface groundwater pollution that prevents hikers from using the springs below it. These long-term physical and health risks also work against our industry.

We understand that your two-year temporary ban will expire on July 20, 2011, and that exploratory drilling on thousands of new claims would immediately resume. We urge you to complete the environmental review process and issue a decision well before that deadline. We support Alternative B, the full 20-year withdrawal of more than one million acres from new mining claims.

The Grand Canyon is a treasure for the nation and our state. It must be protected and preserved. Please support the full 20-year withdrawal of more than one million acres from new mining claims and save the grandeur of the Grand Canyon for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Respectfully,

Debbie Johnson
President & CEO