



**PUBLIC OPINION  
STRATEGIES**

*Turning Questions Into Answers.*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** GRAND CANYON TRUST

**FROM:** LORI WEIGEL, PARTNER

**RE:** KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF ARIZONA VOTERS WITH ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS AMONG COCONINO AND MOHAVE COUNTY VOTERS REGARDING URANIUM MINING NEAR GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

**DATE:** JUNE 8, 2009

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Two-thirds of voters in the counties surrounding Grand Canyon National Park and virtually the same number statewide support a proposal to stop future mining claims on publicly owned lands near the National Park and limit mining to existing, proven sources, according to the results of a survey conducted statewide with additional interviews in Coconino and Mohave counties. The survey was completed earlier this week.<sup>1</sup> The support for such a proposal increases after hearing arguments on both sides of the issue. In addition, voters are four times more likely to say a candidate's position in support of mining would be something to make them less likely to support that candidate than to be a positive factor in their vote decision. More specifically, the survey found that...

- ***More than three-in-five voters support limiting mining to proven, existing sources near Grand Canyon National Park.*** Respondents were told that "In the last three years, more than three thousand mining claims have been filed within a few miles of Grand Canyon National Park, to mine uranium, the mineral which is used in nuclear energy production and nuclear weapons. There is a proposal to stop future mining claims on publicly owned lands near the National Park and limit mining to existing, proven sources." Fully 64% statewide and 66% in the local area comprised of Coconino and Mohave counties support this proposal to limit mining.
- ***Support is broad-based and wide-spread.*** Majorities of many key voter sub-groups indicate support for a proposal to limit mining to existing, proven sources on public lands near Grand Canyon National Park:

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Opinion Strategies conducted this survey of N=400 voters throughout the state of Arizona, with additional interviews for a total of N=300 interviews conducted in Coconino and Mohave counties. The margin of error associated with these samples is  $\pm$  4.9% and 5.66% respectively. Interviews were collected June 3-4 and 7, 2009. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the state and/or county, and are demographically representative of the electorate for that geographic area.*

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- At least three-in-five voters in every single region of the state support limiting mining on public lands near the Park. Support stands at 63% in Maricopa County, 61% in the Tucson area, and 64% in Northern Arizona.
- Support is just as high or even higher in the counties most directly affected. Three-quarters (75%) of Coconino county voters and 61% of Mohave county voters say they support this proposal to limit mining to proven sources on these public lands.
- A majority of voters of all partisan affiliations statewide support this limit, including 76% of Democrats, 66% of Independents and 51% of Republicans. This dynamic holds true in Coconino and Mohave counties as well, as 83% of Democrats, 61% of Independents and 54% of Republicans in this area voice support for this proposal.
- There is little distinction in support based on the type of community in which voters live. Fully 63% of rural voters, 65% of suburbanites and 66% of city dwellers across the state are all in support.
- There is little distinction based on ethnicity statewide, as 64% of Hispanic voters and 65% of white voters voice support for this limit on mining near the Grand Canyon National Park. In addition, in the affected counties of Coconino and Mohave, Native American and Hispanic voters are very strong in their support of limit mining on public lands near the National Park (71% support).
- More than three-in-five voters of every age group, both statewide and in the affected counties, indicate support for this proposal.
- ***What is striking is that this support is evident even though few voters statewide or even in one of the affected counties are aware of the debate over uranium mining in this area.*** Just 21% across the state and only 17% in Mohave County indicate that they have seen, read or heard anything about “uranium mining in national forests and on other public lands around Grand Canyon National Park.” Awareness is higher in Coconino County though, where nearly half (47%) say they have seen something about this issue. In the affected counties, awareness tends to be higher among Native Americans (38% seen something), sportsmen (35%), and college-educated voters (39%).
- ***Rationales in support of a limit on uranium mining are more compelling than commonly espoused arguments against such a limit.*** Voters were provided with a viewpoint in favor of this proposal and one against, with these rationales rotated in order to prevent any order bias. As one can see, both voters statewide and those in the local counties find the rationale in support of the limit more convincing. Generally, an argument must test at 35% very convincing or higher in order for it to be considered effective.

% Very convincing rationale: 37% Arizona and 43% Coconino/Mohave counties.

*We should SUPPORT this proposal to stop future mining claims on publicly owned lands near Grand Canyon National Park because hundreds of these mines could be developed near the*

*heavily visited South entrance to the park, threatening drinking water for millions, the scenic beauty, wildlife and the visiting experience of four million tourists a year who contribute over seven hundred million dollars to the area's economy. Besides, there are many other sources of uranium in the U.S. and Canada that will not put the Grand Canyon at risk.*

*% Very convincing rationale: 20% Arizona and 24% Coconino/Mohave counties. We should OPPOSE this proposal to stop future mining claims on publicly owned lands near Grand Canyon National Park, because it will lock away fifteen hundred square miles of land from all mining and exploration, supposedly to protect a National Park that is already well protected. This proposal also increases America's dependence on foreign, dirty energy, as this valuable resource is capable of producing clean electricity for millions of people, hurts the security of the U.S., and will hurt Arizona's economy and tax base.*

- ***Voters continue to support limiting mining on public lands near Grand Canyon National Park by a two-to-one margin, after hearing the rationales on both sides of the issue.*** In fact, support solidifies rather than deteriorates when voters are provided with commonly expressed reasons for the view points on both sides. Support increases to 66% statewide, to 64% in Mohave County, and remains solid at 75% in Coconino County. The intensity of support increases as well. Statewide, 43% strongly support limiting mining to proven, existing sources, while support is even more intense in both Mohave (45% strongly support) and Coconino counties (55% strongly support).
- ***A position in support of mining on public lands near Grand Canyon National Park could be a detriment to a candidate for public office.*** Voters are four times as likely to say such a position would make them less likely to support that candidate than to be more likely to support that candidate. In the affected counties, 44% say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports mining in this area, with fully 35% much less likely to support that candidate. Just 14% are more likely to support the candidate who takes such a position, while the remainder says it would not affect their vote. Statewide, 37% are less likely to support such a candidate while only 9% would be more supportive and the remainder says it would make no difference in their vote decision.

In the affected counties, this position is a real concern to a number of key sub-groups of voters, including:

	Much Less Likely to Vote For State Legislator
Native Americans	47%
Women	43%
College-educated voters	41%
Independents	37%

## SUMMARY

Voters across the state support limiting uranium mining to proven, existing sources on public lands near Grand Canyon National Park. This support is even stronger among voters in the affected counties of Mohave and Coconino. This support is evident even though awareness of uranium mining is fairly low everywhere, except Coconino County. Support strengthens when voters hear viewpoints on both sides of this issue. Moreover, a number of key swing voter sub-groups in the affected counties indicate that a candidate's support for uranium mining in this area would make them much less likely to vote for that candidate.