

## **Summary/Overview of NAZ Proposed Withdrawal DEIS**

The Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was released for public review and comment on February 18, 2011: <http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/mining/timeout/deis.html>.

There is a 45-day comment period ending on April 4, 2011.

The DEIS evaluates four alternatives, including Alternative B, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's proposed withdrawal of 1,010,776 acres from public lands adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park from mineral exploration and mining for 20 years.

### **IMPACTS FROM NO WITHDRAWAL**

If the proposed 20-year withdrawal does not occur (under the No Action Alternative), the DEIS predicts that the following will occur within 1,010,776 acres of public lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park:

**30 new uranium mines**  
**300,165 ore hauling trips**  
**22.4 miles of power lines**  
**22.4 miles of new roads**  
**316,000,000 gallons of groundwater used for mining**  
**1,364 acres disturbed for exploration and mine development**

**Potential adverse, short and long-term impacts from new uranium mining under the “No Action” alternative, as identified in the DEIS include:**

- Air Quality (20,177 tons of fugitive dust and other air pollutants)
- Water Quality (perched aquifers, springs, and wells all have varying risks of long-term contamination)
- Reduced flows in deep aquifers and springs
- Increased risk of arsenic and uranium contamination in groundwater (concentration of uranium/arsenic from at least one mine might exceed drinking water standards)
- Soil erosion and loss of soil productivity
- Increased concentrations of uranium and arsenic in soil
- Measurable impacts to density and diversity of aquatic and terrestrial habitats
- Individual animals may be impacted by uranium contamination (including possible mortality)

- Wildlife habitat fragmentation will occur
- Mining-related visual impacts could create a high degree of change within the existing landscape, dominate the view, and be a focus of viewer attention
- Sounds from mines and haul roads could be above ambient noise levels within 1.5 miles of mining activities
- Thousands of known historic and prehistoric sites, as well as undiscovered sites, are located in areas subject to direct and indirect impacts from mining
- Mining-related impacts (including long-term loss) to traditional cultural properties and use areas such as Red Butte
- Disturbance to places of traditional cultural practices by native people, including trails, springs, creeks, ceremonial sites, traditional use areas, gathering places, and camps
- Impacts from mining haul trucks to Grand Canyon visitor traffic
- Adverse impacts to users seeking primitive recreation opportunities
- Economic value of tourism expected to remain at \$3.52 billion per year and \$70.4 billion over 20 years, “but tourist and recreationists activity could be displaced” in specific areas
- **Increases from mining “in direct employment would not produce obvious changes in economic conditions for residents and local and regional economies since the change would be a very small percentage in the 5-county area.”**

**IMPACTS FROM 20-YEAR WITHDRAWAL OF THE FULL 1,010,776 ACRES (Alternative B) OR PARTIAL WITHDRAWALS OUTLINED IN ALTERNATIVES C AND D:**

- All adverse impacts from uranium mining would either be reduced or eliminated

Additional consideration:

**No effect on national energy independence:**

“Currently there are no laws in place that would require domestic uranium to be solely purchased and consumed within the United States. As a result, 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.” (DEIS, p.4-253)