



# HAVASUPAI TRIBAL COUNCIL

P.O. Box 10 • Supai, Arizona 86435  
(928) 448-2731 • Fax (928) 448-2551

April 14, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary of Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Uranium Mining in the Grand Canyon Watershed

Honorable Secretary Jewell:

The members of the Havasupai Tribe reside on a small portion of our ancestral homelands in Cataract Canyon within the Grand Canyon watershed. We are the Cohonino for whom the northern Arizona plateau is named and we are the Indians of Indian Gardens within what is now Grand Canyon National Park. We support the 2011 Secretarial withdrawal of federal lands from mining and support the Grand Canyon Watershed Protection Act and the position statement prepared by Grand Canyon Trust.

The aquifers underlying the Coconino Plateau, and the Canyon Uranium Mine, supply our reservation springs which are our only water supply and provide the water for the beautiful blue-green waters that flow over our magnificent and world-famous waterfalls. If this aquifer is contaminated we, the Havsuw 'Baaja, the people of the blue-green water, will be devastated. We cannot relocate and remain Havasu.

We are opposed to uranium mining and are in our second litigation against the Kaibab National Forest over Canyon Uranium Mine. Our strong opposition to the Canyon Uranium Mine is based on specific tenets of our religion as Havsuw 'Baaja and the relationship between the mine site and the locations of our origin. We are opposed to uranium mining on the Coconino Plateau because of the potential irreversible harm it may cause us.

The Canyon Mine has a history that is typical of uranium mining in northern Arizona. The Forest Service approved the Plan of Operations in the 1980's and the mining company conducted surface disturbance and started sinking a mine shaft. When the price of uranium fell in the late 1980's all activity at the mine site stopped. The price of uranium went up again about 4 year's ago and a new mining company re-started the Canyon Uranium Mine under the 25 year-old Plan of Operations. The Forest Service determined that the Canyon Uranium Mine was exempt from the Secretarial Withdrawal because of valid existing rights and a new mining company started sinking the mine shaft. However, the price of uranium fell in 2013 and operations stopped again.

There are no regulations, policies or guidelines addressing this on-and-off process for mining. The Plan of Operations for Canyon Uranium Mine and other mines in northern Arizona contemplate mining to exhaustion of the ore body followed by clean-up and remediation. The Canyon Uranium Mine and others are not "closed" and are not "reclaimed" leaving ore on the surface, mine shafts open to be filled with rain water and few protections for wildlife and the environment. Water was pumped from the Canyon Mine shaft during drilling and put into a holding pond. This water is contaminated with radioactive particles and is evaporating leaving a contaminated residue to blow in the wind.

Shortly after the 2011 Secretarial Withdrawal the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Forest Service developed a set of Best Management Practices to address this situation. We urge you to use your continuing authority under the Withdrawal to adopt these Best Management Practices making them effective immediately to all mining operations within the withdrawal area.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you on this effort. Please let me know if there is a time in the near future when representatives of the Havasupai might meet with you in Washington or on one of your trips to the western states.

Sincerely,

  
for Rex Tilousi, Chairman  
Havasupai Tribe

CC: Assistant Secretary Parks  
Assistant Secretary Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Head of Fish & Wildlife  
Head of Bureau of Land Management  
Superintendent Uberueaga  
State Director of Bureau of Land Management  
State Director of Fish & Wildlife