



Inter Tribal Association of Arizona

21 TRIBAL NATIONS

June 4, 2022

Hon. Chair Cortez Masto
Senate Committee on Energy & Natural
Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands,
Forests & Mining
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Ranking Member Lee
Senate Committee on Energy & Natural
Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands,
Forests & Mining
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

- Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Cocopah Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
- Gila River Indian Community
- Havasupai Tribe
- Hopi Tribe
- Hualapai Tribe
- Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Pueblo of Zuni
- Quechan Tribe
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
- Tohono O'odham Nation
- Tonto Apache Tribe
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Yavapai-Apache Nation
- Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe

Re: Support for S. 387 (The Grand Canyon Protection Act)

Dear Chair Cortez Masto and Ranking Member Lee:

The Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA) supports S. 387, The Grand Canyon Protection Act, scheduled for Legislative Hearing before the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests & Mining on June 7, 2022.

ITAA is an inter-tribal consortium governed by the highest elected Tribal officials from each of our 21 Member Tribes, including Tribal chairpersons, presidents, and governors. The ITAA Member Tribes have been working together since 1952 to provide a united voice for Tribal governments located in the State of Arizona on common issues and concerns. This includes certain cross-cutting topics that generally affect all our Member Tribes, such as threats to our critically sacred cultural and traditional sites.

Accordingly, in February 2021, ITAA Member Tribes overwhelmingly voted to adopt Resolution No. 0212 in support of the Grand Canyon Protection Act (H.R. 1052 - companion bill introduced in the House). A copy of this Resolution is provided here at **Attachment A**.

ITAA Member Tribes overwhelmingly oppose the expansion of uranium mining around the Grand Canyon, as it poses a serious threat to the integrity of these sites and their continued use by the tribal members of our Member Tribes for religious, cultural, and traditional purposes. Accordingly, ITAA also strongly supports S. 387 introduced by Senators Sinema and Kelly of Arizona, and we thank the Senators sincerely for this action.

The location known as Grand Canyon National Park (as well as surrounding Federal lands) is an area of great significance to many of ITAA's Member Tribes, as well as to the Native people of the greater Southwest region. This area has been continually occupied since time immemorial and constitutes the ancestral homeland for many Member Tribes, whose members retain deep cultural connections to the land. The area contains many locations of religious and cultural significance, numerous Traditional Cultural Properties, and sacred sites. This also

includes many seeps and springs which have sustained life in the Canyon for Native people for countless generations, as well as the plants and animals on which they depend.

While ITAA does not purport to speak on behalf of any one Member Tribe, the Tribal Leaders of ITAA will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Member Tribes when it comes to protecting our ancestral lands, and the integrity of historic properties, religious places, and sacred sites located within those lands.

We now urge the Subcommittee to act decisively and pass this bill to protect the Grand Canyon, an important cultural and traditional site for many of ITAA's Member Tribes, from threats from mining. Not only will this benefit all current and future generations who enjoy, use, and appreciate the profound significance and immeasurable value of this important area, it is the appropriate action of acknowledgment and respect for protecting the cultural identities and living heritage of current and future generations of tribal members of ITAA Member Tribes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Dadgar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maria Dadgar, MBA
Executive Director
Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, Inc.

cc: Tribal Leaders

Attachment A



Inter Tribal Association of Arizona

21 TRIBAL NATIONS

Resolution 0121

Support of H.R. 1052, the Grand Canyon Protection Act

Ak-Chin Indian
Community
Cocopah Tribe
Colorado River
Indian Tribes
Fort McDowell
Yavapai Nation
Fort Mojave
Indian Tribe
Gila River Indian
Community
Havasupai Tribe
Hopi Tribe
Hualapai Tribe
Kaibab Band of Paiute
Indians
Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Pueblo of Zuni
Quechan Tribe
Salt River Pima-
Maricopa Indian
Community
San Carlos
Apache Tribe
San Juan
Southern Paiute Tribe
Tohono O'odham
Nation
Tonto Apache Tribe
White Mountain
Apache Tribe
Yavapai-Apache
Nation
Yavapai-Prescott
Indian Tribe

WHEREAS, the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, an association of 21 tribal governments in Arizona, provides a forum for tribal governments to advocate for national, regional and specific tribal concerns and to join in united action to address these concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona have the authority to act to further their collective interests as sovereign tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona has the charge to support and represent particular Member Tribes on matters directly affecting them upon their request; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Canyon is a location of significance to the Native People of the Southwest with numerous locations of religious and cultural importance within the area designated as Grand Canyon National Park and on the Federal lands surrounding the Park; and

WHEREAS, the springs and seeps that provide the water for life in the Canyon for Native People and for the plants and animals on which we depend are at risk and must be protected from depletion and from contamination; and

WHEREAS, the ancient trails that Native People use to reach each other, travel through the Canyons, between the springs and across the Plateau, are at risk; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation, H.R. 1052, the Grand Canyon Protection Act, recognizes the importance of these lands to the Native People affiliated with the Grand Canyon region; and

WHEREAS, mining, and in particular the expansion of uranium mining, around the Grand Canyon poses the greatest threat to the springs and seeps and to Native Peoples continued use of these lands for religious, cultural, and traditional purposes; and

WHEREAS, the passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act will ban new uranium mining within the public lands on and around the Grand Canyon.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona support the passage of H.R. 1052.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was presented and duly adopted at a meeting of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, where a quorum was present on **Friday, February 26, 2021**.



Bernadine Burnette,
Vice-President, Inter Tribal Association of Arizona
President, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation