

**National Congress of American Indians • Center for Biological Diversity
Earthjustice • Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council • Haul No!
National Parks Conservation Association • Sierra Club
The Wilderness Society • Wildlands Network**

February 25, 2019

Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva,

This letter is written on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians, Center for Biological Diversity, Earthjustice, Grand Canyon Trust, Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, Haul No!, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and Wildlands Network. The aforementioned groups support the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.

In 2019, Grand Canyon National Park's centennial year, our groups are proud to stand with tribal members and leaders who have long-opposed the threats of uranium mining—including from the Havasupai, Hualapai, and Hopi Tribes, and Navajo Nation—and a broad coalition of business owners, local government leaders, wildlife groups, and others who oppose uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region. Ultimately, the threats to water, sacred places, and the history of deadly pollution that continues to afflict many tribal communities warrants legislation that will make the ban permanent.

In 2012, after an extensive public process, the Department of the Interior announced a 20-year mining ban on about one million acres of land adjacent to, and hydrologically and ecologically connected to the Grand Canyon. This bill proposes to make that temporary ban permanent. The temporary withdrawal was intended to alleviate critical uncertainties about the biological and hydrological pathways by which uranium mining could harm the land, water and ecosystems of the Grand Canyon. But after seven years, this research is chronically underfunded and behind schedule to the point that the U.S. Geological Survey will not be able to answer the questions it was meant to answer by the time of the ban's expiration in 2032. At the same time, the region and its people are still riddled by seven decades of legacy pollution from hundreds of still-unreclaimed mines and other uranium facilities, including one mine within Grand Canyon National Park.

In 2017, the National Congress of American Indians passed standing resolution #MKE-17-058¹ "Opposing the Reversal of Mineral Withdrawals that Would

¹http://www.ncai.org/attachments/Resolution_xfDBiUOfOEyTfgNHQQQdHIqJMWMSVeTtySBIAsbkZphXQuqFyTU_MKE-17-058%20final.pdf

Adversely Impact Tribal Lands, Waters, Resources, or Native People.” The Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act is consistent with that standing resolution.

A recent research report by the Grand Canyon Trust² (enclosed) explains why, even from an economic and national security perspective, reward is outweighed by the risk that uranium mining poses to the Grand Canyon and the people and economies that depend upon its health. Some of the report’s findings include:

- The U.S. has access to enough already-mined uranium to meet its defense needs, supply its electrical grid, and insulate itself from disruptions in the supply chain.
- The Grand Canyon holds less than one percent of known, unmined uranium reserves in the country.
- When operating, breccia pipe uranium mines are short lived and can offer only temporary employment.
- Mining contamination would risk the thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars that the Grand Canyon brings to gateway communities.

Today, our nation has the opportunity to take the long view and permanently protect the Grand Canyon and those who depend upon it rather than allow it to be jeopardized for the sake of mines that ultimately would benefit no more than the short term profits of a few.

Sincerely,



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/s/

Jaqueline Pata
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/s/

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² “Uranium Mining in the Grand Canyon Region.” January 2019.
<https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/uranium-mining-grand-canyon-region>

/s/

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