



# HAVASUPAI TRIBAL COUNCIL

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March 25, 2022

Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington DC 20585

*Sent via Email: the.secretary@hq.doe.gov*

Subject: Uranium Mining Concern

Dear Secretary Granholm,

The Havsuw 'Baaja, the People of the Blue-Green Water (Havasupai Tribe) is writing to you again to express the concern about the U.S. Department of Energy's consideration of a uranium reserve. We previously submitted a letter to you on October 4, 2021 in response to the RFI. We are deeply concerned with ongoing discussions taking place to increase uranium mining in the United States due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While we understand the United States' position on potentially banning uranium imports from Russia, we cannot stress enough that any uranium mining at the Pinyon Plain Mine (formerly known as the Canyon Mine) located on federal lands near our reservation will have devastating effects for our Tribe. A horrible war across the world should not be grounds for harming the Havasupai Tribe, its members, and other Indigenous communities located here in the United States.

Energy Fuels, Inc. currently operates the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) next to our reservation and on our aboriginal lands and traditional cultural property – Red Butte. This mine has a history of problems, including that it pierced a major aquifer digging what it claimed would be a dry mineshaft, and then sprays the now-contaminated water into the national forest. This mine should not be eligible for participation in any federal program or to receive funding to operate. Allowing the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) to participate in a U.S. uranium mine reserve program under your Department will essentially shift the sacrifice of lives in the war-torn Ukraine for lives of the Havasupai tribal members. This is how serious we see this issue. President Biden ran for office pledging to protect tribal communities and restore tribal sovereignty. We need you to support his pledge to us and not allow the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) to participate under any federal uranium program. Doing so would cut directly against President Biden's pledge and promises.

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Further, the United States has a duty under its trust responsibility to protect the Havasupai Tribe. We live in the year 2022, and the voice of our people should not go unheard. Our Tribe, our members, our land, our water should not be sacrificed when this vast country has other uranium deposits located in areas where mining does not pose a serious threat to the human element.

While we appreciate prior statements from the Department of Energy that there is no intention to initiate or expand mining "on Tribal lands, expand the Office of Legacy Management's (LM) Uranium Leasing Program, or expand access to additional uranium deposits located on other Federal lands," the Department misses a key understanding of the true issues involved. Most of the potential damage to tribal interests occurs from activities on aboriginal territories, sacred sites, and lands adjacent to tribal lands, not "on tribal lands" itself. This is where the federal trust responsibility should be at its strongest point. Indian tribes, like the Havasupai Tribe, rely on the federal government to protect its people from the harmful effects of uranium mining. It should not matter where the mining occurs.

We have lived in our homeland, deep in the Grand Canyon, for thousands of years and the single largest threat to our survival over these thousands of years has been the uranium industry. Mining for uranium not only harms the surface environment but also contaminates our groundwater resources. Our Tribe's sole source of water comes from the very aquifers that sit directly below the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) on our aboriginal lands. If you permit the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) to supply uranium under any federal uranium reserve program then our water aquifers that supply our drinking water and life in the canyon will be contaminated and our existence as a Tribe, as we have known it since time immemorial, will die; not to mention one of the seven natural wonders of the world will be contaminated along with the Colorado River. Why put all of this at risk?

We urgently ask the Department of Energy to uphold President Biden's pledge and promise to protect the Havasupai Tribe and restore tribal sovereignty. We need you and others to hear our voices. We ask that you withhold participation of the Pinyon Plain Mine (Canyon Mine) in any federal uranium program or funding to operate. Not doing so, will place our existence as a Tribe in harm's way.

Sincerely,



Thomas Siyuja Sr.  
Chairman, Havasupai Tribe

Cc: Havasupai Tribal Council

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Denten Robinson, Havasupai General Counsel  
Mark Kelly, U.S. Senator  
Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. Senator  
Joe Manchin, U.S. Senator  
Raul Grijalva, U.S. Representative  
Tom O'Halleran, U.S. Representative  
Deb Haaland, Secretary of Interior, Department of Interior  
Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs  
Brenda Mallory, Chair of White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor  
Michael S. Regan, EPA Administrator  
Cecilia Martinez, PhD, Senior Director for Environmental Justice, CEQ  
Corey Solow, Deputy Director for Environmental Justice, CEQ  
White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council  
Members of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council