



# YAVAPAI-APACHE NATION

## Executive Office

Chairwoman Tanya Lewis

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April 24, 2023

President Joe Biden  
**The White House**  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

### **Re: Proposed Designation of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument**

Dear President Biden:

The Yavapai-Apache Nation of Arizona joins with other Arizona Tribes in urging your designation of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906. The proposed National Monument would encompass around 1,102,501 acres of federal lands north and south of the Grand Canyon. The designation would make permanent the existing 20-year moratorium on uranium and other mining within the area. The designation would also protect the significant cultural, natural, recreational, scientific, and water resources of the area.

The Yavapai-Apache Nation is one of eleven Tribes in Arizona with a documented historical and cultural connection to the Grand Canyon. Federal policy requires that the National Park Service consult with each of the eleven Tribes when taking actions within the Grand Canyon National Park that might impact the Tribes' cultural connections to the Canyon. This consultative requirement underscores the cultural, spiritual, historical, and contemporary living connection that the Tribes have to the lands that comprise the Park. These connections extend beyond the Park's boundaries established by the United States onto the lands that surround the Park.

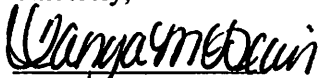
For Tribes, geographic landscapes serve to remind us as tribal people who we are and where we came from. When we visit these places, we hear the voices of the past and are reminded of the things that happened there; both the good and the bad, all of which helped shape who we are as a people. Such places become part of who we are as individuals and in this way these places continue to define our individual tribal cultures. Such places deserve our collective protection under the laws of the United States. Certainly, the lands that surround the Grand Canyon hold important and even sacred meaning for all Tribes who now seek its expanded protection through designation as a National Monument.

The federal public lands surrounding and connected to the Grand Canyon hold a wealth of historic and pre-historic objects of great cultural and biological value. These lands include important watersheds and groundwater resources that have been adversely impacted and continue to be threatened by harmful mining practices. Given the

historical harms visited on local Indian and non-Indian communities from uranium mining during the 1950's and 1960's, no one can seriously advocate for the return of mining to the lands in and around the Grand Canyon. The Tribes have worked for decades at both legislative and administrative levels to protect these lands and the water and other resources that all of our communities enjoy and depend upon.

Today, more than any time in history, there is an urgent need for permanent protection of these lands. The Yavapai-Apache Nation joins with the Tribes represented by the Grand Canyon Tribal Leaders Coalition, and with all Arizona Tribes, in calling on you and your administration to protect the spiritual, cultural, and historical connection of the Tribes to the lands of the proposed Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument.

Sincerely,



Tanya Lewis,  
Chairwoman  
Yavapai-Apache Nation