



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ABQ-10-025

TITLE: In Support of the Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act, H.R. 644

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Havasupai Indian Tribe is comprised of 776 members and is located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon; and

WHEREAS, the Havasupai Indian Reservation, approximately 168,000 acres, and surrounding lands and waters beyond the Reservation boundaries are of immense cultural, religious, spiritual and historic importance to the Havasupai Tribe; and

WHEREAS, a variety of places, plants and animals that possess cultural, religious, spiritual and historic importance for the Havasupai Tribe are situated on lands managed by the federal government and its executive agencies, including but not limited to areas under the authority of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service; and

WHEREAS, the Havasupai Tribe regards various locations under the management and oversight of the federal agencies, specifically those areas located in and around the Grand Canyon to be culturally important, including countless places of spiritual and religious significance; and

WHEREAS, the Havasupai Tribe relies upon the water quality of Havasu Creek (Muuve Aquifer) its surrounding springs and waters to sustain the physical, cultural and religious needs of its people; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government has trust responsibilities and as such has a legal requirement to manage the public lands in a manner that is respectful to the health, welfare, and cultural integrity of Native American tribes; and

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WHEREAS, the exploration and mining of uranium is known to cause serious, detrimental and irreversible human health and environmental impacts that directly conflict with the Federal Government's duty to manage the public lands for the protection and preservation of the places that possess cultural, religious and historic importance to Native people; and

WHEREAS, any such current or future exploratory drilling or mining on top of the Canyon will contaminate Havasu Springs, the Havasupai Tribe's main source of water; and

WHEREAS, uranium contamination of ground-water and surface water adversely and disproportionately affects the Havasupai Tribe and other surrounding tribes who rely on the nearby springs for drinking water and for numerous ceremonial practices; and

WHEREAS, the federal law known as the 1872 Mining Law is an outdated piece of legislation that enables private mining companies to freely take invaluable natural resources, effectively subverting the rights of the public, including Indian tribes to which such places within the public lands possess sacred value and which require protection and preservation from such invasive practices; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Raul Grijalva has requested that the Department of the Interior withdraw lands from future mining claims due to the threat of uranium mining to human health, water quality, nearby Indian tribes, and the integrity of the Grand Canyon National Park; and

WHEREAS, on July 20, 2009, Secretary of the Interior Department, Ken Salazar, issued a two-year segregation order limiting new mining claims on nearly one million acres of federal public lands surrounding the Grand Canyon National Park; and

WHEREAS, since issuing the segregation order in 2009, the Department of the Interior has been evaluating whether to withdraw the lands from mining for an additional 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Raul Grijalva introduced H.R. 644, known as the Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act of 2009, in the 111th Congress, to withdraw approximately 1,068,908 acres of federal land surrounding the Grand Canyon from future mining claims.

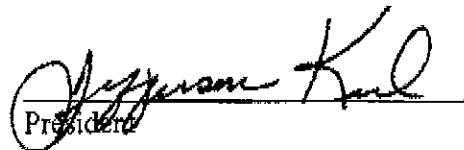
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support, in conjunction with the Havasupai Tribe, H.R. 644 Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act to withdraw more than one million acres surrounding the Grand Canyon from future mining claims, to prevent the future exploration and mining of uranium; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI does hereby support, in conjunction with the Havasupai Tribe, Secretary of the Interior Salazar's proposal to withdraw the lands subject to his current segregation order for 20 years; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until H.R. 644 or substantially similar legislation is enacted by Congress.


CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2010 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center in Albuquerque, NM on November 14-19, 2010, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary