

Draft: Talking points and additional information for letters of support

Overarching message:

The 20-year ban on new uranium mining confirms what local elected officials, sportsmen, conservationists, American Indian tribes, and business owners have been saying for years: uranium mining doesn't belong here. Today, we want to re-affirm our support of the mineral withdrawal because we believe it protects and preserves a national treasure, our water supply, local economies, thousands of jobs and our Western culture.

The Grand Canyon is an irreplaceable natural treasure. Its stunning vistas, ancient geology, and winding Colorado River are world renowned — drawing over 5.5 million visitors to the park each year. Moreover, more than 40 million people and 4 million acres of farmland depend on the Colorado River for clean, safe water.

Yet, irresponsibly operated uranium mines located on federal public land just miles from the North and South Rims threaten to permanently pollute the Grand Canyon landscape and the greater Colorado River.

Few people realize how close they are to a uranium mine when they visit Grand Canyon National Park. Located six miles south of Grand Canyon Village, Canyon Mine sits within an area of religious and cultural importance to tribes like the Havasupai. The mine is also located above groundwater that supplies some of Grand Canyon's most treasured seeps and springs, including Havasu Springs and Havasu Creek.

In 2012, the Secretary of the Interior issued a 20-year ban on new uranium claims on more than a million acres of public lands adjacent to the Grand Canyon. However, the withdrawal does not apply to existing mines, even those located within a few miles of the North and South Rims. The Trust's fight continues against these existing mines and the obsolete rules that currently govern them.

The 2012 mining withdrawal was thoroughly and publicly vetted and overwhelmingly supported by local citizens, hunters and anglers, community leaders and state and federal politicians. The support was non-partisan and very broad based, and thus very different from other issues like national monument designations. There is no place for Uranium mining in the Grand Canyon area.

By the numbers:

- 3,156...Uranium claims that are potentially viable within the Withdrawn area.
- 15...Springs that have uranium concentrations that exceed EPA's standards for safe drinking water.
- 4...Uranium mines on the North and South Rims currently in various stages of operation.
- 40 million...People who depend on the Colorado River for clean, safe drinking water.

Economic Impact:

With the Grand Canyon at the center of Arizona's outdoor-recreation industry, this decision protects the Colorado River and Arizona's economy. Grand Canyon National Park itself supports 12,000 jobs and fuels \$680 million into northern Arizona's local economies every year. Statewide, tourism generates

annual economic activity of more than \$16 billion, and tourism businesses account for 82,000 – or one in ten – Arizona jobs.

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching in Arizona contribute \$2.2 billion to the state economy annually.

Keeping the Colorado River healthy ensures local economies will continue to thrive with a robust multi-billion dollar tourism and recreation industry.

A 20-year ban on new uranium mining is a smart move to protect the Colorado River, public lands, thousands of jobs and the economic future of the West.

Protecting the Grand Canyon is good business. New uranium mining is a risk we simply can't afford to take.

Environment, Plants and Animals:

Beyond the raw numbers, the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River connect us with our history and to the land. Some things are simply priceless, like preserving the cultural, historic, and hunting and fishing traditions thousands have enjoyed here for generations.

Water is scarce in the desert, and collecting ponds filled with contaminated mine water tempt wildlife with poisonous, radioactive water. Unsuspecting birds, small mammals, and insects drink from the ponds, which have dissolved uranium concentrations up to 80 times the safe drinking water standards. During an inspection of the Kanab North mine site, a 2 foot gap beneath the fence showed Bighorn sheep tracks.

The web of seeps and springs typical to the region is not well understood, other than the fundamental truth that water flows downhill. This means that some level of contamination from a mine even if treated and fenced appropriately will find its way to a place that the flora and fauna of the area depend on.

The Grand Canyon area and Kaibab plateau is a fragile ecosystem and uranium mining in this area presents an unnecessary risk.

Health & Safety:

Studies of the Grand Canyon's uranium mine sites reveal an alarming pattern of radiological contamination. In 2010, the USGS found radioactive dust at more than 10 times the background concentration more than 300 meters beyond the fenced portion of the Kanab North Mine Site.

In 2010, the USGS reported that 15 springs and five wells near uranium mines in Grand Canyon watersheds have dissolved uranium concentrations that exceed drinking water standards. Currently, there are no regulations requiring long-term groundwater monitoring below uranium mine sites.

Uranium hauling puts not just the area immediately around the mine at risk, but the path of the transport at risk also. Most uranium ore mined in this area is likely to be processed at the White Mesa Mill near Blanding, Utah and will travel through dozens of small communities including Williams, Flagstaff, Cameron, Tuba City, Kayenta and Bluff. In 2010 the USGS found radioactive dust above background levels on a similar haul route a full **20 years** after the mining had stopped.

New methods of mining likely lower the risk of contamination, but the risk remains and the extent of the impact is not fully known, particularly in terms of how any contaminant may migrate through the complex and little understood web of springs and seeps typical to the region.

With the mineral withdrawal, the 40 million people who depend on the Colorado River for drinking water can rest assured that our water supplies will be protected from the pollution risks of uranium mining.

Clean-up Costs:

Mine clean-up is costly and often litigious. Mines that get played out or are unprofitable are often abandoned and insolvent owners leave the taxpayers with the bill. Even well managed mines operated with legal practices require clean-up as they reach the end of their useful life.

The EPA recently settled for \$600M to clean up abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Reservation. Clean-up of the Orphan Mine on the south rim of Grand Canyon National Park has already cost \$15M and is not complete.

There are no requirements for mining companies to post a bond to cover future clean-up costs of new mines. Clean-up and monitoring are necessary even with well managed mines. Clean-up is necessary for the safety of people, water and habitat, but with no assurance the money for clean-up will be available when it is needed, it is irresponsible to re-open the area to new mining.

Supply and Demand

Based on geologic studies, the total reported reserves for all of northern Arizona are currently less than 2% of the total U.S. reserves (USGS).

Considering uranium supplies from friendly trading partners like Canada and Australia the impact of any uranium extracted in the withdrawal area on the overall uranium supply to the U.S. becomes even less significant.

The Uranium market is a worldwide market. Over 50 countries produce Uranium and 15 countries produce more than the U.S. Australia is by far the largest producer, followed by Kazakhstan and Canada. The U.S. produces approximately 10% of what we use.

All U.S. mines are owned by foreign companies (primarily Canadian) who operate as subsidiaries in the U.S.

Risks vs. Benefits:

Weighing the benefits (economic benefit and the incremental uranium supply) against the risks (human safety, water, wildlife, long term clean-up costs)... mining around the Grand Canyon simply makes no sense.