



**Grand Canyon Protection Act gets Senate Hearing**  
***Arizonans Urge Senate to pass bill to secure protections for lands around Grand Canyon***

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**Senate Committee Considers Grand Canyon Protection Act**

**Arizonans Urge Senate to Protect 1 Million Acres Near Canyon from Mining**

**PHOENIX** -- A Senate subcommittee held a hearing today on the **Grand Canyon Protection Act**, an important step toward passage of legislation that will protect about 1 million acres of public lands near Grand Canyon National Park from toxic uranium mining. The Act would make permanent a ban on mining that was enacted administratively in 2012.

A broad coalition of conservation organizations, business owners, faith groups, local government leaders, military veterans, hunting and fishing groups, river runners and others joined Indigenous Tribes and Nations to urge the U.S. Senate to expeditiously pass the bill, which has already passed the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill was heard in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's Public Lands, Forests and Mining Subcommittee.

"As more and more threats face the lands and waters, as well as the people, in the Grand Canyon region, including from harmful uranium mining, it is more important than ever that the Senate pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act," said **Sandy Bahr, director for Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter**. "Now is the time for senators to listen to Tribal leaders, including from the Havasupai Tribe, and to act to protect these lands."

"We urge the passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act—a long-held goal of many Indigenous tribes and nations alongside a broad coalition of supporters who agree this region is inappropriate for uranium mining," said **Amber Reimondo, energy director for the Grand Canyon Trust**. "The bill's passage will permanently safeguard a culturally and economically significant landscape and the complex groundwater systems beneath it that grow more important amidst a megadrought."

"As a network of diverse faith traditions we are dedicated to protecting sacred land for all traditions," said **Rev. Katie Sexton-Wood, executive director, Arizona Faith Network**. "Uranium mining would desecrate this site that is sacred to Indigenous communities in Arizona. Mining this sacred land would be a moral and spiritual violation. Congress must act and protect this sacred space."

"As a family-owned Grand Canyon river outfitter, we stand with Tribal leaders in strongly supporting passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act," said **Fred Thevenin of Arizona Raft Adventures**. "The waters of the Colorado River, and springs that feed tributaries in its beloved side canyons, are the touchstones of a just over \$40 million sustainable river running economy. Rafting companies all together carry 24,500 commercial passengers down the river through this world-renowned landscape every year. Mining uranium on the rimlands of Grand Canyon threatens not only local and generational livelihoods, but the many deep connections we help foster in this amazing place we love and steward."

"Indigenous peoples including the Havasupai Tribe, the natural waters, and the vital interconnected rimlands of Grand Canyon simply should not be facing this threat of uranium mining—especially not now, with climate change delivering such severe blows to the Colorado River and the watershed of the canyon," said **Wild Arizona executive director Kelly Burke**. "This is why we so strongly support Native Tribes and Nations, our conservation colleagues, and

the Colorado River recreation community, in this urgent call to move forward with passing the Grand Canyon Protection Act."

"The Arizona National Scenic Trail is a national treasure and international destination worthy of protection from the toxic impacts of uranium mining," said **Matthew Nelson, executive director with the Arizona Trail Association**. We have an opportunity right now to prioritize clean air, water, land, natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation opportunities, and Indigenous rights over a tiny uranium deposit. The risks don't outweigh the rewards, and the impacts are forever. The Arizona Trail Association urges Congress to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act now."

"The Grand Canyon is too special to mine," said **Earthjustice senior legislative representative Blaine Miller-McFeeley**. "It's a national treasure, sacred to numerous Indigenous tribes in the Southwest, and an important part of the Colorado River watershed. Uranium mining would destroy and desecrate this iconic site and imperil a water supply relied upon by millions of people. It's time for Congress to act and permanently protect the area surrounding the Grand Canyon for generations to come."

"The Grand Canyon needs permanent protection from deadly uranium pollution right now," said **Taylor McKinnon with the Center for Biological Diversity**. "Mining threatens to permanently damage the canyon's aquifers, springs and creeks, and harm the people and wildlife that depend on them. That's not a risk worth taking. It's time for the Grand Canyon state's senators to lead and get this critical legislation passed."

"We are pleased the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining is taking this important step by holding this hearing on the Grand Canyon Protection Act," said **Miché Lozano, Arizona program manager with National Parks Conservation Association**. "This bill would protect the greater Grand Canyon watershed from new mining, ensuring not only the preservation of one of America's most awe-inspiring places, but also of the waters vital to Tribes. We hope the Senate acts swiftly to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act."

### *Background on Uranium Mining at the Grand Canyon*

Mining in the Grand Canyon region is a threat to the people, land, water, and wildlife that make this place so extraordinary. Uranium mining has left a legacy of pollution and health problems on the nearby Navajo Nation. The Pinyon Plain uranium mine now poses a potential threat to the waters of Grand Canyon and the Havasupai Tribe and desecrates the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property.

The Grand Canyon Protection Act would prevent any new mines or mining claims in the region. In addition to the environmental and cultural impacts, there is no economic or national security

benefit compared to the risk uranium mining poses to the Grand Canyon and the people and economies that depend upon its health.

In 2012, the Interior Department temporarily withdrew more than 1 million acres of public lands around Grand Canyon National Park from new mining claims under the 1872 Mining Law. This banned new mining claims or the development of all but a handful of pre-existing mines for a period of 20 years, the maximum allowed administratively. That ban was unsuccessfully challenged by mining interests. The Grand Canyon Protection Act would make the temporary ban permanent.

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