MOHAVE COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 2019-065

OPPOSING H.R. 1373 WHICH SEEKS TO MAKE PERMANENT THE 2012 URANIUM MINING BAN

WHEREAS, Mohave County is located in Northwestern Arizona and the Mohave County Board of Supervisors is committed to wise stewardship and land conservation and continued recreational access for hunters, anglers, campers, and other recreationists, as well as allowing for productive uses, including agriculture, timber production, mining, and energy and natural resource development;

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2012, President Barack Obama’s Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar withdrew from mineral entry 1.07 million acres of subsurface estate in Coconino and Mohave Counties, in northern Arizona;

WHEREAS, one of the richest grades of uranium ore in North America sits untouched in the northern region of Mohave County due to the 2012 withdrawal. The 375 million pounds of uranium deposit in the area is the equivalent of enough electricity generating capacity for the entire state of California’s 40 million people for 22.4 years;

WHEREAS, the affected area included in the withdrawal was specifically left open for multiple use as part of an open 1984 compromise agreement directed at the behest of House Interior Committee Chairman Morris Udall among environmental groups, the mining industry, the livestock industry, both states of Arizona and Utah and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan;

WHEREAS, That compromise created 6 to 8 mile protective buffer zones around the Grand Canyon National Park in the form of 300,000 acres of designated BLM and 800,000 acres of National Forest Wilderness areas while releasing lands with high potential for mineral extraction and livestock grazing and recreational purposes;

WHEREAS, the uranium industry in the southwest has historically been a major economic driver for the region. Mohave County and our neighboring State of Utah could see major economic potential with the opening of more uranium mining near the Arizona Strip. Mining in the area can bring in over $40 million annually in payroll, $9.5 million in mining claim payments and fees to local governments in Arizona and Utah, and over $30 billion over a 42 year life span, helping to finance local schools, roads, hospitals, and other infrastructure;

WHEREAS, Congressman Raul Grijalva has introduced H.R. 1373, titled the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act that aims to make permanent the 2012 uranium mining ban along with including a mining ban on any land or interest in land acquired by the United States after enactment of the bill;

WHEREAS, H.R. 1373 is very misguided with its title. Since the 1984 Compromise there has been no mining allowed within BLM Wilderness areas or within the Grand Canyon National Park itself;

WHEREAS, the Government’s own Draft Environmental Impact Statement stated that there is no evidence to show that mining activities outside the Grand Canyon National Park pose a risk to areas within the Colorado River drainage or inside the National Park itself;
WHEREAS, Modern mining industry reclamation techniques are vastly superior to those used by the United States government during the Cold War era uranium boom of the 1950 and 1960s, which did bring harm to Native American and local populations and are demonstrably improved and safe;

WHEREAS, Arizona and neighboring Utah have abundant in-ground uranium resources, considerable existing uranium infrastructure, and large numbers of qualified workers capable of supplying defense and energy needs for decades to come;

WHEREAS, the permanent ban of uranium mining in the Arizona Strip area would be detrimental to our local economy and cause severe economic harm to local communities without promised economic benefits from tourism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mohave County Board of Supervisors that Mohave County strongly opposes H.R 1373 and any attempt to make permanent the 2012 Uranium Mining Ban in the Arizona Strip area of Mohave County.

ADOPTED ON THIS 17th DAY OF JUNE, 2019:

MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hildy Angius, Chairman

ATTEST:

Ginny Anderson, Clerk of the Board