June 24, 2019

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lowenthal, Ranking Member Gosar, and Members of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources:

On behalf of our more than one million members and supporters, The Wilderness Society writes to offer views on H.R. 3405, the Uranium Classification Act of 2019, being heard on June 25th in the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. We respectfully request that our views be submitted into the hearing record.

The Wilderness Society supports H.R. 3405. This bill would remove uranium from the administration’s list of “critical minerals.” Under the guise of national security, the administration’s recently-announced “Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals” attempts to remove existing laws and requirements that ensure safeguards for people and the environment in the interest of expediting permitting for mines of so-called “critical minerals.” There are similar attempts in Congress to allow for “critical mineral” mines to be eligible for expedited permitting under Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act authorities, which was intended for surface infrastructure projects. These reviews are wholly inadequate for considering human health and environmental impacts. Nor do they provide for meaningful tribal consultation or public input on processes that could deliver devastating impacts to our land, water, and communities.

By removing uranium from the “critical minerals” list, this bill ensures that any mining for uranium will be done in accordance with the environmental requirements and review that the impacted communities deserve. Furthermore, it ensures that places like Bears Ears and the Grand Canyon are not targeted for uranium extraction under the false pretenses of “national security,” when more than fifty percent of our uranium comes from some of our strongest allies: Canada and Australia. We urge all members of the Subcommittee to support H.R. 3405.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Lydia Weiss  
Director of Government Relations  
The Wilderness Society