

**TESTIMONY TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS
OF THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Legislative hearing on: "*Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act*"
H.R. 1373 (Rep. Grijalva): "To protect, for current and future generations,
the watershed, ecosystem, and cultural heritage of the Grand Canyon region
in the State of Arizona, and for other purposes."

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Good morning.

Thank you, Chairwoman Haaland, Chairman Grijalva, and committee members for this opportunity to speak in support of the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.

I am Amber Reimondo, the energy program director for the Grand Canyon Trust.

I am truly honored to speak today, alongside my hometown mayor, the Honorable Coral Evans, and the Honorable Carletta Tilousi, Councilwoman of the Havasupai Tribe. We are allied members of diverse communities who are directly and adversely affected by ongoing uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region. We are united in support of permanently protecting the Grand Canyon from uranium mining.

The Grand Canyon Trust is a regional conservation organization based in Flagstaff, Arizona. The Trust's mission is: "To safeguard the wonders of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, while supporting the rights of its Native peoples." We have been working to protect the Grand Canyon from uranium mining and other threats since the Trust was founded in 1985.

The Grand Canyon Trust supports Havasupai's fight to prevent their sole source of drinking water from being permanently contaminated by the Canyon Mine. We support protecting the watershed, ecosystem, and cultural heritage of the Grand Canyon region for current and future generations.

For seven decades, uranium mining has left a deadly legacy of air, water, and soil contamination across Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. In 2005, the Navajo Nation banned uranium mining on their land, encompassing nearly 18 million acres located in three of the Four Corners states. The Havasupai, Hualapai, Hopi, and other Grand Canyon-affiliated tribes have also banned uranium mining and are unified in supporting the administrative 20-year ban on new claims on more than a million acres of public lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park.

Despite the temporary ban ordered by the secretary of the interior in 2012, pre-existing mines have already demonstrated the risks of uranium mining on public lands within the withdrawal area. Since the spring of 2017, miners have needed to continually remove contaminated water from the mineshaft at Canyon uranium mine. When reopening Pinenut Mine in 2009, where the mineshaft was

supposedly capped and safe from water intrusion, the company discovered that the mineshaft was flooded with nearly 3 million gallons of water contaminated by exposed uranium ore. And at the nearby Kanab North Mine, located on the Grand Canyon's north rim, radioactive dust has contaminated soils well beyond its fenced perimeter.

Uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region is an unnecessary threat to our tourism-based economies and the people who depend on the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon Trust supports communities, businesses, and hundreds of education, science, and other organizations that are sustained by the Grand Canyon's enduring assets of clean air and water and by its natural and human heritage.

The National Park Service recently reported that "6.3 million visitors to Grand Canyon National Park in 2018 spent \$947 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 12,558 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$1.2 billion."¹

Breccia pipe uranium mining supports few, and temporary jobs. Permanently contaminating the Grand Canyon threatens the loss of billions of dollars to the backbone of our regional economy.

Through the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act, we have an opportunity to prevent new uranium mining on 1 million acres of critically important public lands bordering Grand Canyon National Park, and in so doing,

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/grca/learn/news/grand-canyon-economic-benefit.htm>

the opportunity to safeguard the Grand Canyon region, and the people, wildlife, and economies that depend on it.

In this, Grand Canyon National Park's centennial year, we proudly join with citizens – of many political persuasions and personal histories – to stand with one united voice in supporting the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.

In conclusion, we want to thank the Havasupai people for being the Grand Canyon's guardians since time immemorial. We also want to thank Chairman Grijalva for his years of leadership in defending the Grand Canyon. And lastly, we thank the bill's co-sponsors and the majority of Arizona voters² who support permanently protecting the Grand Canyon from uranium mining.

I'll be happy to answer any of your questions.

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https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/sites/default/files/resources/Grand_Canyon_Arizona_Poll_Key_Findings_Aug_2018.pdf