

Profile: Paul Gosar, Anti-public-lands Congressman

Gosar's Positions of Power Related to Public Lands

U.S. House of Representatives (2011-Present), Arizona's 4th District

Member, Committee on Natural Resources

Chair, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Member, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans

Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Member, Subcommittee on the Interior

Chairman, U.S. Congressional Western Caucus ([Elected in November 2016](#))

Actions in the Current Congress

In the less than two months the 115th Congress has been in session, Gosar has introduced and supported several anti-public lands bills.

Gosar has introduced a resolution ([H.J. Res. 46](#)) that would reverse a rule recently finalized by the Obama administration to better protect national parks from the harmful impacts of oil and gas drilling in and adjacent to the parks. He also cosponsored a bill ([H.J. Res. 45](#)) that would similarly overturn the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's ability to better manage oil and gas drilling and fracking on national wildlife refuges.

Furthermore, with his support of [H.J. Res. 44](#), Gosar is also pushing to undo a recent revamp of the Bureau of Land Management's planning process that has not been updated for 30 years. By pushing to overturn this important update, Gosar is essentially saying no to putting the voices of public-lands users on an equal footing with extractive industries that mine and drill on public lands. He is also saying no to making the process significantly more effective by allowing for planning to occur on a landscape level in order to, for example, take into account the needs for wildlife migration corridors. His support of the Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) bill known as [H.R. 622](#) would further hamstring the Bureau, along with the U.S. Forest Service, by taking away the agencies' abilities to enforce laws on the lands they manage.

Gosar's Anti-public-lands History

Paul Gosar represents much of western Arizona, and between 2011 and 2016, the congressman introduced or cosponsored at least 32 anti-public-lands bills.

With his support of these bills, it is clear Gosar is out of touch with the majority of Arizona voters, more than 88 percent of whom agree that public lands are essential to their state's economy.¹ Wildlife viewing is big business in Arizona, with wildlife-related recreation contributing \$2.4 billion in annual

¹ Source: Weigel, L. and Metz, D. Conservation in the West Poll. Sponsored by the Colorado College State of the Rockies Project. 2013.

spending.² Despite these facts Gosar routinely rails against “federal overreach” and is one of the leading voices in Congress to fight federal ownership of, and protection for, public lands. He champions uranium, mining and livestock industries regardless of the harm his policies would cause to public lands, waters and Arizona’s indigenous people.

During Gosar’s political career, the energy and natural resources sector has contributed the fourth-most money — [\\$247,950](#) — to his election campaigns.

Among Gosar’s many past anti-public-lands bills, [H.R. 1904](#) and [H.R. 687](#) stand out. Both would have traded public lands sacred to western Apache tribes to an international mining behemoth, Rio Tinto, for its proposed Resolution Copper Mine, despite the fact that the area was withdrawn from mining 60 years ago by executive order of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The material removed from this mine would cover thousands of acres of public land with toxic waste, and when the mine was closed it would leave behind a crater up to two miles wide and 1,000 feet deep. After Gosar’s bills and others like it failed, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) pushed the land swap through by forcing the inclusion of a midnight rider on a must-pass defense funding bill in late December 2014.

Another of Gosar’s past bills, [H.R. 5836](#), would require the secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to sell land to the states for the purposes of hunting, fishing, off-roading and shooting. But once those lands are state owned, they could also be sold to the highest bidder to be drilled, mined, logged, crisscrossed by roads and developed.

In 2011 and 2013 respectively, the congressman made his dislike of national monuments clear by introducing [H.R. 2877](#) and [H.R. 1495](#), which would have revoked the president’s authority to designate national monuments in Arizona. In response to legislation proposing the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument, Gosar said, “[the] double-dealing bill [isn’t even worth the paper it was printed on.](#)” Also, Gosar [showed support for the Bundys](#) during the now-infamous Nevada standoff between the militia and the BLM when the agency tried to round up Cliven Bundy’s trespassing livestock. Gosar even [traveled to Bunkerville](#) during the conflict.

In these ways Gosar claimed in a recent flyer to be “[Making the West Great Again.](#)”

Anti-public-lands Bills Sponsored or Cosponsored by Gosar:

Bill Type Bill Nickname (Bill Number)	Sponsored	Co-Sponsored
Land Seizure		
Public Lands Sale for "Recreation" (H.R. 5836)	X	
Oak Flat Land Trade (H.R. 1904)	X	
Oak Flat Land Trade (H.R. 687)	X	
State Choice of 5 Percent of Public Lands (H.R. 2852)		X
No Increase in Public Land (H.R. 4423)		X

² Source: <http://www.ourpubliclands.org/public-lands-report-az>

Private/State Control of Public Lands BLM Road Authority Seizure (H.R. 5598) Weakens R.S. 2477 Rules (H.R. 4313) End BLM/USFS Law Enforcement (H.R. 4751) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 2316) Local Control of Public Land Access (H.R. 1555) Local Control of Public Land Access (H.R. 4272) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 1294) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 6009) State Beetle Kill Logging Projects (H.R. 695) State Beetle Kill Timber Projects (H.R. 818) State Beetle Kill Timber Projects (H.R. 6089) State Control, Fisheries and Hunters (H.R. 2406) State Oil and Gas Control (H.R. 866)	X	X X X X X X X X X X X
Weakening Federal Protections Weakens Grazing Management (H.R. 4234) No More Uranium Withdrawal (H.R. 3155) Border Patrol Free Reign (H.R. 2398) Weakens Grazing Management (H.R. 657) Logging Priority on Forests (H.R. 1526) Timber Over Forest Conservation (H.R. 2647) Sage Grouse Is Not Endangered (H.R. 4739)		X X X X X X X
No More Parks, Monuments, Refuges Limiting New Monuments (H.R. 3946) No New Monuments in Arizona (H.R. 2877) No New Monuments in Arizona (H.R. 1495) Barriers to New Monuments (H.R. 1459) Local Monument Nullification (H.R. 2258) Local Monument Approval (H.R. 900) State Approval of Monuments (H.R. 4132)	X X X	X X X X

Campaign Contributors ([2016 Election](#), as of December 2016, source: Center for Responsive Politics):

- Oil and Gas Industry:
 - \$5,750
- Energy and Natural Resources Sector³:
 - \$86,600
- Major Funders (in Gosar's Top 100 Contributors, 2016 Election):
 - **Coal:** Arch Coal (\$3,000)
 - **Grazing:** Arizona Cattle Feeders' Association (\$1,500)
 - **Mining:** Freeport McMoRan (\$13,500)
 - **Conglomerates:** Koch Industries (\$2,500)

³ The energy and natural resources sector includes: oil and gas, natural gas pipelines, mining, coal mining, alternative energy production and services, electric utilities and waste management.

League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard:

- [Lifetime](#): 7 percent