



STATE OF ARIZONA

JANET NAPOLITANO
GOVERNOR

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March 6, 2008

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The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to you on behalf of the citizens of the State of Arizona to express concerns regarding the impact of uranium development on the Grand Canyon National Park. As you know, the Grand Canyon is not only an Arizona treasure, it is a National one and we must fully understand environmental impacts before moving forward with uranium mining or millsite activities. Therefore, I request that you exercise your emergency withdrawal authority under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 U.S.C. Section 1714 to stop new claimstaking and conduct an overall environmental impact analysis of uranium development around the Grand Canyon. It is imperative that we fully understand impacts to the land and water in the Canyon region before moving forward with mining and millsite activities. Should the analysis determine a negative impact to the Canyon, you should exercise your authority to withdraw the lands from mineral entry for twenty years. The attached map shows the areas of concern.

As you may be aware, the dramatic rise in prices for uranium over the last three years has created a "boom" that has the potential to seriously harm the Grand Canyon National Park and the water quality of the lower Colorado River. According to a report by The Environmental Working Group, 2,215 new mining claims have been filed within 10 miles of Grand Canyon National Park since 2003, and that 805 of those claims are within 5 miles of the Grand Canyon National Park. As those claims are further developed, the industrial development in the vicinity of the Park and along its watersheds would have significant negative economic, cultural, and environmental repercussions for the residents of Northern Arizona and for the citizens of the State of Arizona.

On Tuesday, February 5, 2008 the Board of Supervisors for Coconino County passed a resolution opposing uranium development in the vicinity of the Grand Canyon National Park and its watershed. The resolution reflects the sentiment of citizens in the local communities around the Grand Canyon and calls for the withdrawal of mineral entry that I am now requesting.

These efforts have resulted in stories and editorials in the New York Times and other newspapers. These reflect the high level of public concern, both here in Arizona, and nationally, about the prospect of uranium mines opening on the rim of the Grand Canyon. This is not just an Arizona concern; this has national implications.

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
March 6, 2008
Page 2

There are places where uranium might be appropriately mined, but I think that almost every American can agree that the Grand Canyon is not one of those places. As President Theodore Roosevelt, who created what is now Grand Canyon National Park, said:

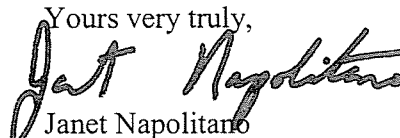
In the Grand Canyon, Arizona has a natural wonder which, so far as I know, is in kind absolutely unparalleled throughout the rest of the world...

Leave it as it is. You can not improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it. What you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and for all who come after you...

In 1906, President Roosevelt put his words into action and removed the land from mineral entry that is now largely encompassed by the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. Since that time, additional lands in the region, including those that fall within the boundaries of the Grand Canyon Parashant and Vermillion Cliffs National Monuments were protected from new mineral entry. The Navajo Nation has prohibited uranium development on their tribal lands bordering the Grand Canyon and other tribes are considering doing the same. Indeed, the Navajo Nation just passed Tribal Superfund legislation to specifically help address the large number of abandoned and unreclaimed uranium sites on their land.

The withdrawal from mineral entry of the three areas that I have indicated will complete the process of protecting the Grand Canyon from the adverse affects of mineral development that President Roosevelt began more than a century ago. On behalf of the citizens of the state of Arizona, I, therefore, petition and request that you remove those federal lands identified on the attached map. Should you need additional information, please contact Lori Faeth, Sr. Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment at 602-542-1334, lfaeth@az.gov.

I thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

Yours very truly,

Janet Napolitano
Governor

cc: Congressman Rick Renzi
Congressman Raul Grijalva
Congressman Nick Rahall
Senator John McCain
Senator John Kyl
Senator Jeff Bingaman
The Honorable Ed Schafer Secretary U.S. Department of Agriculture
Chairwoman Ono Segundo, The Kaibab Paiute Tribe
Chairman Don Watahomigie, The Havasupai Tribe
Chairman Ben Nuvamsa, The Hopi Tribe
Chairman Charles Vaughn Sr., The Hualapai Tribe
President Joe Shirley Jr., The Navajo Nation