



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

100 M St. SE
Suite 700
Washington, DC
20003

Creating parks and
protecting land for
people

www.tpl.org

Chairman Grijalva,

The Trust for Public Land is pleased to support the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Grand Canyon National Park is world-renowned for its dramatic geology, biological diversity, rich paleontological and archeological resources, and its importance to numerous tribes throughout the Southwest. The Grand Canyon Protection Act will protect these invaluable resources from future extractive activities like uranium mining. This type of mining could have detrimental impacts on the Grand Canyon watershed and the water resources that are vital to the indigenous peoples who call the canyon home. We applaud your leadership on this important issue, particularly your support of the businesses, tribes, and local communities that rely on this irreplaceable landscape.

The Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act will protect approximately one million acres of public lands around Grand Canyon National Park through making permanent the current 20-year administrative mineral withdrawal, which protects the watershed from new mining. Tribal nations—including the Havasupai Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, and Hopi Tribe, and the Navajo Nation—business owners, sportsmen and sportswomen, local government leaders, conservation organizations, and outdoor recreation groups, proudly stand together to support permanent protection of the Grand Canyon.

The effort to permanently protect the Grand Canyon has taken many years. In 2012, after an extensive public process, and following the urging of Representative Grijalva, the Department of the Interior announced a 20-year mining ban on about one million acres of land adjacent to, and hydrologically and ecologically connected to, the Grand Canyon. This bill proposes to make that temporary ban permanent. The temporary withdrawal was intended to alleviate critical uncertainties about the biological and hydrological pathways by which uranium mining could harm the land, water and ecosystems of the Grand Canyon. But after eight years, this research is chronically underfunded and behind schedule to the point that the U.S. Geological Survey will not be able to answer the questions it was meant to answer by the time of the ban's expiration in 2032. At the same time, the region and its people are still riddled by seven decades of legacy pollution from hundreds of unreclaimed mines and other uranium facilities, including one mine within Grand Canyon National Park.

In 2019, the National Congress of American Indians passed standing resolution #REN-19-001 “Opposing Mining on Public Lands and Around the Grand Canyon Without Tribal Nations' Free Prior and Informed Consent.” The Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act is consistent with that standing resolution.

The Grand Canyon Protection Act -- included as a provision in the Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act, H.R 803 -- will benefit tribes and other impacted communities, natural ecosystems and wildlife, and the region’s thriving outdoor economy by permanently protecting the greater Grand Canyon watershed from new uranium mining. We thank you for your leadership and express our strong support for the legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W.P. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Lee
Senior Vice President for Policy, Advocacy, and Government Relations
The Trust for Public Land