



The Respect Great Bend coalition applauds Representatives Raúl Grijalva (AZ), Jared Huffman (CA), André Carson (IN), Melanie Stansbury (NM), Dina Titus (NV), Earl Blumenauer (OR), and Joe Neguse (CO) for sponsoring the Great Bend of the Gila National Monument Establishment Act.

In response to the legislation introduction, members of the Respect Great Bend coalition said:

Skylar Begay, Respect Great Bend Co-Manager / Archaeology Southwest:

“Over the past three years, I have explored the Great Bend of the Gila, learned of the deep histories it holds, and spoken with many Tribal leaders and members about what this landscape means to them. These experiences have only strengthened my resolve to advocate for the protection of this incredible place. The Great Bend of the Gila’s value as an ancestral and cultural landscape means it is paramount that Tribes have the opportunity to co-manage a Great Bend of the Gila National Monument if it is to be protected in the right ways. Congressman Grijalva has our sincere gratitude for his unceasing support for permanent and proper protection of this extraordinary place, and I thank all the bill’s co-sponsors.”

Aaron M. Wright, Preservation Anthropologist, Archaeology Southwest, and an expert on the deep history of the Great Bend region:

“This legislation is the culmination of over a decade of hard work and commitment on the part of many advocates to protect the values that make the Great Bend so significant, including its cultural, historical, and spiritual importance to 13 Tribes and other descendants and local communities. As Tribal partners make clear, the heritage places of the Great Bend and the stories they hold still urgently need better, more permanent protection. The time is now, and national monument designation is the right choice.”

Rev. Katie Sexton, Arizona Faith Network

“Indigenous Peoples have called the Great Bend of the Gila home for millennia. Their stories span thousands of years and remain visible in the dwellings, pottery, geoglyphs, and petroglyphs still present today. The Great Bend of the Gila National Monument Establishment Act, introduced by Representative Raúl M. Grijalva and co-sponsors, is a vital effort to protect these sacred lands. This legislation ensures Indigenous communities have a voice in managing and preserving their ancestral lands. The Arizona Faith Network fully supports this Act, recognizing our responsibility to safeguard God’s creation for future generations.”

Vianey Olivarría, Chispa Arizona

“Chispa Arizona celebrates today’s bill introduction by Rep. Raúl Grijalva. We are inspired by our Indigenous relatives who have called the Great Bend of the Gila home for millenia, have ongoing ties to the land, and have been calling for its designation as a national monument for decades. The legacy of cultural diversity here is literally written on the landscape in the form of tens of thousands of petroglyphs authored by Native Tribes.

We thank Rep. Grijalva for listening to the call of Tribes to protect this land for generations to come. The Great Bend of the Gila is not just a physical place, but critical to our understanding of the rich diversity and culture of our state’s stories and history, and a connection to the experiences of Indigenous, Latinx and other communities that make our country whole. We ask that Congress also hear the call of the original caretakers of this land and protect The Great Bend of the Gila in perpetuity.”

Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club - Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter

"Thank you Representative Grijalva for again being a leader in protecting lands in Arizona and listening to the Tribes with connections to these lands. Keeping intact and protecting the Great Bend of the Gila is critical for wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep and desert tortoises, and is important to recognize and preserve the cultural resources and connections for the Indigenous people of the region. Establishing this monument will also help to keep the lands more resilient to the impacts of climate change."

Laiken Jordahl, Center for Biological Diversity

“We’re profoundly grateful to Rep. Grijalva for his unwavering support of Tribally led efforts to protect the Great Bend of the Gila. Designating this stunning desert wildlife hotspot as a national monument would permanently protect these lands from relentless urban sprawl and ensure this fragile cultural landscape is preserved for generations to come. We applaud this bill and fervently support efforts to ensure Indigenous Nations co-manage the remarkable lands they’ve stewarded since time immemorial.”

Romir Lahiri, Conservation Lands Foundation:

"The Conservation Lands Foundation expresses our sincere appreciation to Representative Grijalva and all of the bill’s cosponsors for listening to local Tribes and communities by introducing legislation to protect the Great Bend of the Gila in southwest Arizona. Representative Grijalva’s bill illustrates strong community support for the permanent protection of the Great Bend of the Gila, and will preserve this landscape’s irreplaceable cultural, historic and natural resources for the enjoyment and benefits of future generations."

Rebecca Gillis, The Conservation Alliance

“The Conservation Alliance is excited to unite a multi-sector coalition of national businesses to support the creation of the proposed Great Bend of the Gila National Monument. Permanently protecting this landscape with the Antiquities Act will continue to fuel Arizona’s growing outdoor recreation economy. Just last year, the Arizona outdoor recreation economy contributed \$11.7 billion to the state’s gross domestic product (GDP), and supported more than 106,000 jobs. Increasing access to public lands, conservation, and outdoor recreation continue to be sustainable sources of growth and development for local economies.

The Conservation Alliance and our 250+ member companies stand strong in our support of the proposed Great Bend of the Gila National Monument. We thank Representative Raúl Grijalva, the bill’s co-sponsors, tribes, and local leaders for championing the protection of this landscape for generations to come.”

Danny Giovale, Kahtoola

“Kahtoola is proud to support the creation of the proposed Great Bend of the Gila National Monument. As an Arizona-based business in the outdoor industry, we deeply understand the importance of preserving our public lands—not only as spaces for recreation but as vital assets in combating climate change and preserving biodiversity.

Our company has always been committed to not just enjoying the outdoors but also ensuring that these spaces remain accessible and thriving for future generations. We stand alongside The Conservation Alliance and member companies in thanking Representative Raúl Grijalva, tribal leaders, and local communities for their unwavering dedication to safeguarding Arizona’s unique landscapes.”

Camilla Simon, Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO)

“HECHO strongly supports the permanent protection of the Great Bend of the Gila and applauds Representative Grijalva for introducing new legislation to protect this precious landscape with tremendous cultural, historical, and ecological significance. Indigenous people have called this region home for millennia. History is written all over this landscape. There are tens of thousands of petroglyphs by Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Euro-Americans. Unfortunately, this region is threatened by vandalism, target shooting, urban expansion, and development. It is time to protect it permanently as a national monument.”

Mark Magaña, GreenLatinos

“We applaud Representative Grijalva’s unwavering commitment to Tribes and local community members for the introduction of this critical bill. We thank Representatives Huffman, Carson, Stansbury, Titus, Blumenauer and Neguse for cosponsoring this widely supported legislation. 51% of Arizona’s residents of color and 41% of Arizona’s low income residents live in an area that is nature deprived. The Great Bend of the Gila’s permanent conservation would allow for federal resources and programming to connect locals with this astonishing landscape, improve public health and foster stewardship of its vast cultural and ecological qualities.”

Sanober Mirza, National Parks Conservation Association

“National monuments are some of our greatest storytellers, and the Great Bend of the Gila holds countless stories etched into its expansive river valley. It’s a living landscape where the endangered Sonoran pronghorn still roams, despite the relentless pressures of climate change and urban expansion. This legislation recognizes the role of Tribes in the stewardship of this landscape, ensuring the traditions, stories, and environment endure for future generations. We thank Representative Grijalva for his unwavering support in protecting Arizona’s treasured landscapes and commitment to Indigenous communities.”

Janessa Goldbeck, Vet Voice Foundation

“Ranking Member Grijalva is a lifelong champion of our public lands and he’s always had an open door for our organization and to veterans and military families. We applaud him for introducing this legislation and stand ready to do our part to see it become law.

This unique landscape provides veterans and military families – from Arizona and throughout the country – a place of solace, reunion, and reflection following military service. It deserves permanent protection. Moreover, at least thirteen federally recognized Tribes maintain cultural, historical, and ancestral ties to the Great Bend of the Gila. Native people have the highest per capita rate of service of any population in the U.S. Armed Forces, therefore any issue important to Tribes is categorically important to veterans and military families.”

Mike Quigley, The Wilderness Society:

“We commend Representative Grijalva’s long-standing efforts to permanently protect the Great Bend of the Gila and applaud the bill’s co-sponsors who support protecting this Sonoran landscape in Arizona. This region has shaped much of the Southwest’s history and heritage; a national monument—with significant Tribal consultation and engagement—will safeguard this landscape for future generations.”

13 federally recognized Tribal Nations with cultural, historical, spiritual, and ancestral ties to the region include, in alphabetical order: Ak-Chin Indian Community, Cocopah Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Fort Yuma-Quechan Indian Tribe, Gila River Indian Community, Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Tohono O’odham Nation, Yavapai-Apache Nation, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe. [Learn more at www.respectgreatbend.org](http://www.respectgreatbend.org)