

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0301

July 27, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We the undersigned representing the states of Arizona and Utah respectfully request that you use the authority granted to you under the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FPLMA) to revoke the withdrawal order of January 9, 2012. That action by President Obama's Interior Secretary Ken Salazar imposed a 20-year withdrawal of approximately 1,006,545 acres of federal mineral estate in northern Arizona from location and entry of new mining claims under the General Mining Law of 1872 [30 United States Code 22-54]. This federal mineral estate underlies approximately 626,678 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona Strip Field Office and 355,874 acres of National Forest System lands managed by the Kaibab National Forest. Located within the withdrawal area there are 4,204 acres owned by the Arizona State Land Department for the benefit of Arizona's school children, and 19,789 acres of land held in private ownership, but which from time, the Federal Government claims subsurface ownership and management control.

The withdrawal area constitutes the bulk of a 326,000,000 acre uranium reserve which the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) estimates would provide California's 40 million residents 22.4 years of electricity. (See attached NEI comparison chart). The breccia pipe formations scattered across the region represent *the* largest deposits of uranium in the United States and contains the highest grades of American uranium ore by a factor of 6. Thus, the Northern Arizona deposits constitute the crown jewel infrastructure for America's nuclear power generating capability and represent the nation's most critical reserves for such purposes.

Make no doubt about it, during the Cold War era uranium boom instigated by the Atomic Energy Commission under the direction of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, environmental safeguards were not high on the list of priorities and much damage was done to the health and welfare of Native Americans and other citizens due to poor mining techniques and safeguards. However, industry practices and technological advancements in recent years have made remarkable improvements to actively prevent environmental damage and significantly reduce associated health risks. In short, uranium mining and protecting the environment and human health are no longer mutually exclusive.

What is a concern is the January 2012 Secretarial Withdrawal. That withdrawal ignored significantly improved environmental realities on the ground and, more importantly, it upset a seminal agreement reached by the Arizona and Utah Congressional delegations at the time of passage of PL 98-406, the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan.

Righting this wrong by revoking this withdrawal is important to us because we believe that running roughshod over the provisions of the 1984 law constitutes a direct threat to our national security. The 1984 legislation--

which directly impacts both Arizona and Utah economically--was based on a legitimate compromise reached at the request of then House Interior Committee Chairman Morris Udall and witnessed by Senator John McCain (then a freshmen House member) and Senator Orrin Hatch along with former Utah Senator Jake Garn and Arizona's Dennis DeConcini.

Specifically, that compromise allowed for an additional 387,000 acres of National Forest and BLM land to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System as a buffer to the Grand Canyon and released for multiple-use activities including exploration and mining of 540,000 acres of land. Stakeholders at the table at the time included the National Parks and Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, Arizona Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, graziers, timber companies, the mining industry, local businesses, civic groups, regulatory agencies, local county and state governments from Arizona and Utah.

Industry studies have shown direct adverse impacts from this withdrawal to rural portions of six counties in Arizona (Mohave, Coconino) and Utah (Kane, Garfield, San Juan and Washington) of between 2,000-4,000 lost jobs and \$29 billion in overall economic activity in the region at peak production.

At the time of completion of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station outside of Phoenix in 1986, one hundred percent of the nuclear power generation was from domestic uranium. Today, alarmingly, U.S. utilities import (mostly from nations under the Russian umbrella, namely, Kazakhstan) over ninety-two percent of the uranium used to produce electricity. As you know, nuclear power constitutes twenty percent of our country's daily use.

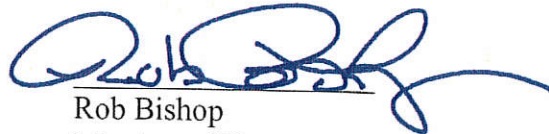
Thus, we were pleased to see that in response to President Trump's March 28, 2017 Executive Order 13783 Energy Independence & Economic Growth, that the USDA listed Revocation of the January 9, 2012 Salazar northern Arizona Withdrawal as the primary way that the Forest Service could immediately act to provide abundant clean fuel for America's nuclear power generating stations. The same principle applies to adjacent BLM lands as we have noted above.

Revoking the Salazar Jan 9, 2012 Withdrawal, placing northern Arizona's vast quantities of uranium to work in domestic nuclear plants to replace unfriendly, unstable foreign uranium sources is a national security priority and is the only way to achieve national energy independence. We respectfully ask you to take action to accomplish that goal as outlined by the President.

Sincerely,



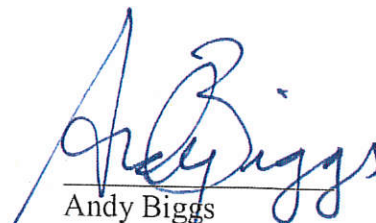
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions
Member of Congress




Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



John Curtis
Member of Congress




Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress