

December 10, 2021



Water for Arizona Coalition urges passage of Grand Canyon Protection Act

Action would build on recent significant progress Congress has made to support clean and resilient water supplies for Arizona communities and beyond

The Water for Arizona Coalition today urged Congress to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act. The bill would make permanent a temporary ban on new uranium and other hard rock mining on about 1 million acres of public land around Grand Canyon National Park. If passed, the bill will stop hundreds of mining claims waiting for the temporary administrative ban to be ended, taking a major step forward to help secure clean water supplies and environmental justice for the region. The bill was introduced earlier this year by Reps. Raúl Grijalva and Tom O'Halleran and Sens. Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly. The bill passed through the House, but has not yet received a vote in the Senate.

The Water for Arizona Coalition released the following statement on the GCPA:

[“Water is now a top three issue with Arizona voters](#), and the Water for Arizona Coalition is grateful for our state’s Congressional delegation members who are responding and who worked hard to pass the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and its generational investments in water. We also recognize the leadership of Sens. Kelly and Sinema and Reps. Grijalva and O’Halleran as they continue to fight for all Arizona communities to ensure they have a water secure future, including their efforts to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act.

“Facing compounding threats of aridification, drought, and uranium mining, the water stakes are high in the Grand Canyon — an economic driver for Arizona and a place of great cultural and spiritual importance to at least 11 sovereign Indigenous tribal nations.

“Groundwater is the primary drinking water source for the region and its massive tourism economy — an economic engine that supports 13,000 rural jobs and over 6 million annual national park visitors, who directly spend about \$1 billion in neighboring communities. The Grand Canyon region’s complex groundwater systems also feed springs and creeks, which in turn support unique ecosystems, [Havasupai Tribal homelands](#), and hundreds of magical oases found below the rim. Allowing uranium mining in the Grand Canyon regions threatens both the water quality and water quantity of this precious groundwater resource.

“With water supplies shrinking across the Colorado River Basin, we cannot risk sacrificing the region’s primary source of drinking water and tribal homelands for a [negligible amount of uranium](#).

“Congress has an opportunity to help safeguard a global treasure, protecting communities, livelihoods, and the many deep spiritual and cultural connections to this irreplaceable landscape for generations to come. Let’s get the Grand Canyon Protection Act across the finish line.”

About the Water for Arizona Coalition

[The Water for Arizona Coalition](#) is a community of Arizonans who support innovative practices and smart policies to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state’s needs. The Coalition was recently recognized as an Arizona Capitol Times “2020 Leader of the Year” for their efforts in protecting Arizona’s most valuable resource. Organizational support is provided by solution-oriented groups like American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, Business for Water Stewardship, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and Western Resource Advocates that collectively have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts across the state.

