



December 10, 2021

Via email

Senator Mark Kelly  
Hart Senate Office Building  
Suite 516  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Important progress made by Congress to support clean and resilient water supplies for Arizona communities and the Grand Canyon Protection Act as a Next Step**

Dear Senator Kelly:

[Water is now a top three issue with Arizona voters](#), and the Water for Arizona Coalition is grateful for your leadership and hard work in securing passage of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and its generational investments in water. We also want to recognize your ongoing efforts to ensure all Arizona communities have a water secure future, especially your work to advance the Grand Canyon Protection Act.

The Grand Canyon Protection Act 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. The Water for Arizona Coalition is supporting the bill because it takes a major step forward to help secure clean water supplies and environmental justice for the region.

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. Thank you for water leadership and ongoing work to help get the Grand Canyon Protection Act across the finish line.

Sincerely,

The Water for Arizona Coalition

### **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.*

