

MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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June 5, 2017

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Secretary Zinke,

The Mohave County Board of Supervisors is writing you this letter to request that the Secretary of the Interior look into the uranium mining withdrawal near the Arizona Strip done by former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Secretary Salazar imposed a 20 year ban on over 1 million acres of land in the Arizona Strip Area for the purpose of Uranium mining in 2012. This ban included both public lands and National Forest System lands. Uranium mining would have brought in nearly \$29 billion to our local economy over a 42 year period. This ban took away much needed growth and jobs from our area. We are requesting that your office look into this ban and if necessary start a process with public comments to withdraw the ban.

Secretary Salazar issued this withdrawal without complying with the law requiring coordination with local governments. The Federal Land Policy Management Act, 43 USC Section 1711 requires that the Secretary and his designees "coordinate" with local government as to development and implementation of any plan or management action. Coordination is defined in the Act as requiring prior notice of proposed plans and actions to the local government officials ("prior" meaning prior to public announcements, and early enough to provide "meaningful" participation by the local officials in the "development" of the plan or action.). The congressional mandate of coordination also requires the Secretary to use all practicable means to reach consistency between the federal plan/management action and local policy, plan or law. All of which Secretary Salazar did not do.

We respect and take a responsibility for protecting the Grand Canyon, but saying that the Grand Canyon will suffer because of mining is inaccurate. Secretary Salazar's reasoning behind the withdrawal was out of concern that it could damage the region's drinking water and the park's water quality. Bureau of Land Management officials contradicted those claims by saying that their Arizona Strip field office had no evidence of contamination of water, and had no evidence of problems with the safe operation of the uranium mines in operation on the lands.

Uranium mining is important and useful for many reasons. The lands in the "Strip" contain the nation's highest grade uranium deposits and enough uranium to provide power generation for the state of California for over 20

years. Uranium is useful in many ways. It is used by our military for national security and defense. Uranium metal is very dense and heavy. When it is depleted (DU), uranium is used by the military as shielding to protect Army tanks, and also in parts of bullets and missiles. The military also uses enriched uranium to power nuclear propelled Navy ships and submarines, and in nuclear weapons. The withdrawal of uranium mining from the "Strip" harms the American people by removing between 326-375 million lbs (the equivalent electricity generating capacity for the entire state of California's 40 million people for 22.4 years) of uranium.

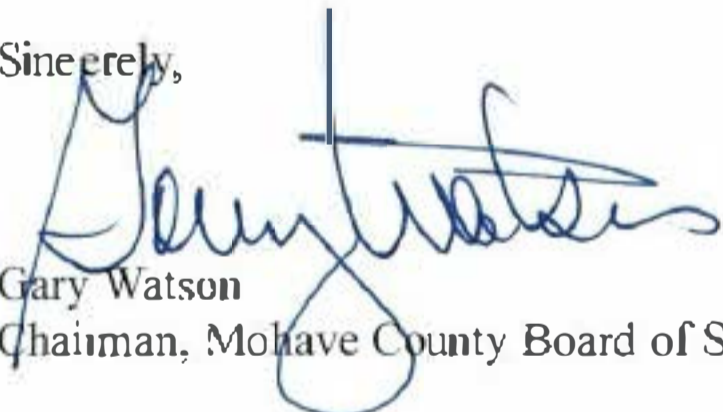
From a national security standpoint, domestic utilities now import 90% of the uranium used to operate America's 104 nuclear reactors. Thirty years ago, these reactors used U.S. mined uranium for 100% of electricity production. The nation cannot be pro-nuclear and anti-nuclear fuel. In sum, these deposits represent the last available use of our public lands for economic growth in our region.

The opponents of uranium mining have chosen to ignore the fact that mining with environmentally sound reclamation was conducted from the early 1980s until the price of uranium collapsed in 1993. No mining at all occurred from 1993 until 2010, and the Denison mine which is now operating, is following and often exceeding all environmental and safety laws.

Arizona needs to go back to the roots that led to Arizona being developed, and that is mining. The strict federal and state environmental laws already on the books will protect the public from environmental damage to the Grand Canyon watershed. The mining of uranium however does not affect ground water nor destroy the natural resources of the land. It does not require open pit mining. Upon completion of mining one Breccia Pipe (4 years) the land is placed back into its native state.

In conclusion, we ask that you look into the 2012 withdrawal like you are the monument designations. Removing land from being explored for uranium mining purposes is hurting not only our local economy but our national economy as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Watson", written over a large, stylized blue circular mark.

Gary Watson
Chairman, Mohave County Board of Supervisors