



Statement on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act of 2019, delivered by Brian Stultz, Deputy Director and Stewardship Director of Wild Arizona. Mr. Stultz is a veteran from Prescott, Arizona. Contact: brian@azwild.org (775) 340-9154

Thank you Chairman Grijalva and Congressman O'Halleran for introducing this historic bill to protect Grand Canyon from new uranium mining development. And thank you everyone for being here.

My statement is made in support of the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act, standing with the Havasupai and Hopi Tribes, the Navajo Nation, and the Grand Canyon conservation community. Today I represent the voices of my organization, Wild Arizona, and its passionate conservation supporters across Arizona and beyond. I am a veteran and am also honored to share brief statements from fellow veterans with deep connections to Grand Canyon.

Permanently halting new uranium mining around the Grand Canyon is life-affirming, socially just, and environmentally and economically wise. Uranium mining is not a new threat of unknown consequence. The cost of previous uranium mining, for example, has ranged from permanent contamination of pristine water sources for wildlife and Park visitors, to generational damage to the health and culture of indigenous families.

In contrast, protecting Grand Canyon's wild lands, waters, and healthy air comes with economic, social, and ecological benefits, which are healing, longer-lasting, and far exceeding the politically-driven capital gains of mining.

Grand Canyon and its springs ecosystems are biodiversity hotspots. Uranium mining on public lands surrounding the park threatens to disrupt, deplete, and pollute aquifers that feed the springs and streams. Associated development and transportation would fragment habitats, disturb sensitive wildlife, and obstruct recreation and wildlife corridors.

To veterans like me, the restorative mental and physical health benefits gained through time spent in places such as the Grand Canyon cannot be replaced. Uranium mining around Grand Canyon will cause irreversible damage to the natural environment, preventing veterans from

finding the healing they need after returning from the battlefield. A permanent ban around Grand Canyon will ensure that all Peoples can benefit from this place forever.

From Christopher Forcum, United States Air Force: “The impacts of uranium mining are environmentally disastrous and a serious threat to the health of people and wildlife living near mining operations. Even with Environmental Protection Agency monitoring, groundwater contamination and the release of airborne carcinogens is inevitable. I strongly support legislation to permanently ban uranium mining near the Grand Canyon.”

From Kim Crumbo, United States Navy: "To a veteran returning from two deployments as a Navy SEAL to Vietnam, the Grand Canyon was a national treasure and a personal sanctuary. I spent nearly 40 years there, as a river guide, river ranger, and wilderness advocate. We have the opportunity and the obligation to defend its waters and the magic of its immense wild landscapes.”

From Jeff Glessing, United States Marine Corp: "Veterans have dodged chemicals and inoculations of all kinds during our careers. When we recreate, we want to be able to do that in beautiful and wild lands like the Grand Canyon. It is a travesty of great proportion that the people of the lands around the Grand Canyon are still suffering from uranium contamination. This moratorium on uranium mining in and around the Grand Canyon should be passed and signed to further protect vital national resources, for the freedom of all peoples to come and see this great Canyon. They have a right to do so at will and to do so safely."

From Dick Overfield, United States Army: “As a Vietnam era soldier I learned, eventually, that no matter how confident everyone was that something was about to happen, it almost always didn’t, or at least not in the way we expected. If human beings were involved, it was going to be complicated; unpredictable, amazing; horrible all jumbled up together. When I was discharged from the Army, I returned to Arizona; found a job with the Forest Service as a mounted, backcountry fire guard, a job that made it possible for me to put myself back together as a more or less “normal” person. The Chiricahua Mountains; the North Rim of the Grand Canyon were perfect places to do that. Our public lands are uniquely powerful, awe-inspiring; magical. Protect them, support all veterans by passing the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.”

From Jeff Drey, United States Army: “Uranium mining in lands adjacent to the Grand Canyon will inevitably damage and disrupt the ecosystem of the most iconic land feature of the United States. As a veteran I cherish the land my brothers and sisters have fought and died for. These lands, resources, and wildlife therein need to be respected, protected, and preserved for future generations of Americans.”

Thank you.