

January 8, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Proposed Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument

Dear Mr. President:

As present and former Arizona Game and Fish Commissioners, we have extensive knowledge on the importance of habitat conservation across the public and private lands in Arizona. As Commissioners, we are charged with making sure not only game species thrive within our borders, but also non-game species of wildlife such as the California condor and the Black-footed ferret. We are responsible for all of Arizona's diverse wildlife and held accountable by both consumptive users as well as non-consumptive users.

We are also well aware of the management issues surrounding Arizona's wildlife, and how complex that can be, particularly in dealing with land ownership matters, and the various Federal designations placed on much of that land. Arizona has more National Monuments (18), than any other State in the Union. In fact, only 23% of the remaining federally owned land in our State does not have some sort of special designation. We do not believe we need any more!

The people of Arizona are our stakeholders, and to that end, we support the multi-use concept on our public land. That approach allows us to provide the most recreational opportunities with respect to wildlife for whatever pursuit a citizen desires, from hunting, to fishing, wildlife watching, boating, hiking, camping, photography, or OHV use. This multi-use approach allows us to work closely with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in concert to further the objectives of the multi-use concept.

That partnership is not broken, and we do not believe another layer of bureaucracy is needed to conserve or "protect" 1.7 million more acres on the Arizona Strip or Kaibab National Forest.

There have been several reasons put forth as to why a monument designation is needed, but we say to you, Mr. President, that reasoning is offering you a solution to a non-existing problem! Some of those issues include the following:

- **Protection from uranium mining** The area is already protected under a moratorium on uranium mining until the year 2032. If that ore is ever needed, we might have an environmentally safe technology in the future that would allow for clean extraction.
- **Protection of old growth trees** Arizona's forest products industry is but a shell of its former self and selected harvest and forest management shouldn't be eliminated as a viable management tool. Some of the catastrophic fires over the last decade demonstrate the importance of regulated forest management.

- **Public land grazing** The proponents of eliminating what they call “inappropriate livestock grazing” would eliminate ranchers who exhibit good stewardship practices for both the land and wildlife. No one wants poor land stewards and they should be dealt with accordingly, but the good ones not only make a living ranching, they do so with wildlife in mind. The Arizona Game and Fish Department works hand in hand with ranchers and private land owners all over the state to that end.
- **Road closures** Extensive travel management plans have been undertaken by the Forest Service and BLM which has resulted in the closure of many roads. We do not believe the public needs to be further shut out from accessing our public lands.
- **Wildlife migration corridors** Some have said our premiere mule deer herd may be in jeopardy as they move between Arizona and Utah, but so far they are not. If there ever is an issue, we should seek to remedy and mitigate it - not adopt another set of rules on this area now for a non-existent problem.

President Theodore Roosevelt’s legacy has already protected much of the Grand Canyon. In fact, the Grand Canyon National Park was first a monument, but now is a National Park and citizens must pay to see it and enjoy it. The National Park Service is behind in maintenance and management, and is millions of dollars in arrears. We don’t have that problem on the Kaibab and Arizona Strip so we would respectfully request that you not designate these lands as a monument and subject them to more rules and regulations that are not only unnecessary, but would complicate the management of Arizona’s wildlife by our Game and Fish Department.

We can ensure Arizona’s wildlife is properly managed and conserved by the continued cooperation and partnership of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, USFS and BLM, without the necessity of another National Monument in Arizona.

Respectfully submitted,

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CC: Arizona Congressional Delegation
Governor Doug Ducey
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