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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0301

**COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
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**COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES**

SUBCOMMITTEES

ENERGY AND MINERALS

INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS

WATER AND POWER

February 18, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to you today to express deep concern and to ask that you not use an Executive Order to declare the Grand Canyon Watershed a National Monument. We request that any designation pursued be done so in a way that includes public input and seeks congressional approval. Efforts in managing this pristine area of pride for our nation are currently being handled appropriately and locking up 1.7 million acres would be a step backwards.

Arizona is blessed with some of the most beautiful and unique landscapes on Earth. From the saguaro-studded hills of the Sonoran Desert to the snowcapped ridges of the San Francisco Peaks and the awe-inspiring chasms of the Grand Canyon, recreational enjoyment of Arizona's diverse landscapes is deeply ingrained into the culture and daily lives of Arizona residents and visitors from around the world. For generations, Arizonans have enjoyed responsible, multiple-use recreation on these public lands, and have been active participants in conserving this amazing public resource.

At a time when the National Park Service, which is one of the federal agencies responsible for managing our national monuments, is already struggling with an annual budget shortfall, why would we burden them with new responsibilities? Due to budget strains, many parks are reducing access and limiting staff to handle current shortfalls. The NPS maintenance backlog alone is currently at \$12 billion and rising. We would ask that no new designation be placed on our lands until obligations to maintain our current parks are met.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission continues to voice its concerns regarding such a designation. The Commission, a constitutionally-mandated group of citizen volunteers, has already considered the alternatives and voted in 2012 to oppose creation of the monument.

We agree with the Commission, which stated that changing the management objectives of this large swath of land would negatively “impact public access, recreation, grazing, and the ability of the commission to manage wildlife.” The Arizona Game and Fish Commission also accurately pointed out that nearly 50 percent of all land in Arizona is already under federal management and that “more than 77 percent of Arizona’s lands are restricted from public access and recreation...” Furthermore, the Commission noted that more than 10 million acres in Arizona is already managed as some form of wilderness, and that the state already has more designated wilderness acreage than 47 other states. Furthermore, Arizona already has more national monuments than any other state with a total number of 18.

The nearly two million acres inside the Grand Canyon Watershed are already managed with great success through cooperation between federal and state agencies. We believe lands already managed by government for a diverse public do not need the additional layer of bureaucracy and restrictions that a National Monument designation would bring. Nor should these lands be closed to public access to natural resources and recreational opportunities. Because of their integral role in the everyday life of the American people, we strongly oppose any conversion of public lands in this area from multiple-use to more restrictive land use designations.

In addition to our opposition to locking these lands away from public access, we are also concerned that this decision may be made unilaterally as an Executive Order, devoid of any public input process or consultation with related state level agencies. A unilateral designation of the Grand Canyon Watershed as a National Monument would erode the extensive cooperation and success that federal and state agencies in Arizona have achieved to date. We urge you to respect and support the successful multiple-use of this land as currently executed.

The ability of the Arizonans to enjoy the responsible use of their public land must be respected. Again, we ask that you please refrain from any unilateral National Monument designation of the Grand Canyon Watershed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we would appreciate a timely response to this letter. Please feel free to contact Jeff Small in Rep. Gosar’s office at jeff.small@mail.house.gov regarding this matter.

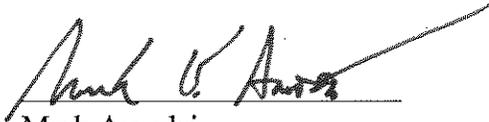
Sincerely,



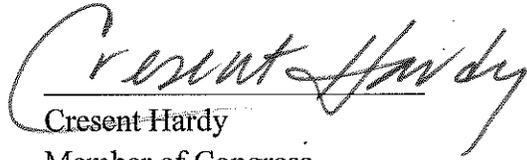
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Cynthia Lummis
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei
Member of Congress



Crescent Hardy
Member of Congress



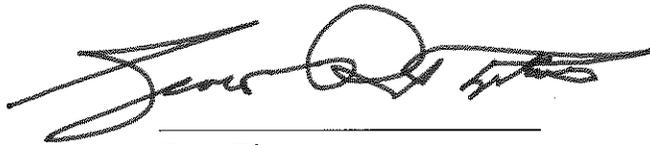
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



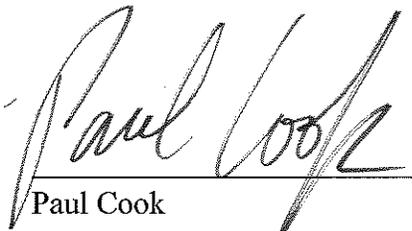
Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



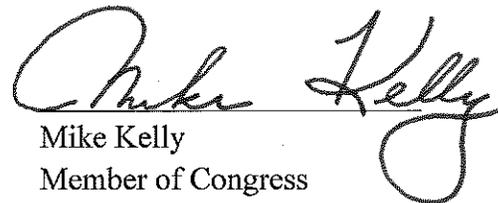
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress



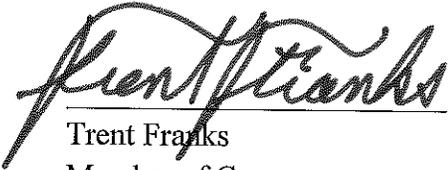
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Member of Congress



John Culberson
Member of Congress



John Fleming
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Louis Gohmert
Member of Congress



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



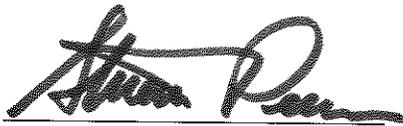
Steve King
Member of Congress



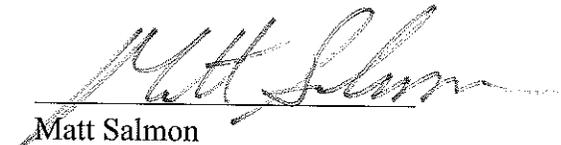
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of Interior