

OPENING STATEMENT
CONGRESSMAN PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S.
ARIZONA'S 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



Public Listening Session on:

“Government Land Grabs: Exposing the Truth”

Monday, April 11, 2016
8:00 a.m.
Beale Celebration Center
201 N. 4th Street, Kingman, AZ

Good morning everyone and thank you all for coming out today. It's great to see so many people engaged and passionate about this very important issue that has significant implications for our communities.

I want to especially thank each of our witnesses for being with us today and taking time out of their busy schedules. We look forward to your testimony.

As most of you know, radical special-interest groups have unleashed a propaganda campaign to lock up 1.7 million acres of land in the Grand Canyon Watershed. Under the guise of creating a new national monument, environmental organizations are intentionally trying to sabotage important energy development, grazing rights, water rights and other recreational activities, regardless of input from communities affected by these designations.

Today is an opportunity for the people that would be most affected by this misguided effort to have their voices heard. The only way we are going to block this terrible proposal is to stand shoulder to shoulder and continue to demonstrate significant opposition.

Staff please bring up Slide 2. With the stroke of a pen, President Obama has designated and expanded more national monuments and more acreage than any other president in the history of our country.

Slide 3 please. In a 2010 Department of Interior "NOT FOR Release" document, we learned that the Obama Administration had a secret list

of potential national monuments being considered in 11 Western States, including Arizona. Obama is starting to go down the list and recently designated three new national monuments in the California desert encompassing nearly 1.8 million acres.

Slide 4. A couple days after that declaration, this full page ad from the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the Natural Resources Council and others ran in Politico thanking Obama for making this massive designation. Every single congressional office got a copy and frankly, I was disgusted when I opened the paper to this particular page.

Slide 5. While the proposed Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument was not on the 2010 list, special-interest groups and Rep. Grijalva have continued to press this misguided effort. Shamefully, they are lying to the American people when doing so and have been trying to say this was an idea that was initiated by the tribes.

Slide 6. In fact, this proposal was put forth by the Sierra Club, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Wilderness Society.

Slide 7. They even explicitly say so in their 15 page proposal. You all may not be able to see in the back, but it's the highlighted part.

Slide 8. Here is their initial 1.7 million acre map. Eerily similar to Rep. Grijalva's map.

Slide 9. In their 15 page proposal, they didn't even attempt to sugarcoat

it and said they want this massive designation in order to restrict access and prevent grazing, mining and forest management activities.

Slide 10. Another slide showing they want to prevent active forest management. If they actually cared about the watershed, they would allow thinning and harvesting to occur in order to prevent catastrophic wildfires that cause significant harm to watersheds.

Slide 11. Another slide explicitly stating they want to reduce road density, retire grazing permits and prevent mining.

Slide 12. These special-interests are trying to claim a lot of support exists for this proposal as a result of a push poll of 500 people which included statements and questions about how great the Grand Canyon is. While the Grand Canyon is great, it is already protected under the Clean Air and Clear Water Acts as well as countless other regulations.

Slide 13. I spearheaded a FOIA request submitted to the Department of Interior four months ago on possible monument designations. They have refused to respond to date.

Slide 14. At a recent March hearing, BLM Director Neil Kornze confirmed coordination and discussions in relation to future national monuments are underway.

Slide 15. The far-left is trying to use all kind of scare tactics to sell this proposal including that it is necessary to prevent uranium mining.

Uranium mining is already blocked in this area till 2032 and their other claims are without merit.

Slide 16. The proposed Grand Canyon Watershed would be significantly larger than the Grand Canyon. It's a watershed though so there will be no new monies from Congress and no significant tourism dollars associated with this land grab.

Slide 17. In July of 2015, the House passed my amendment to block the Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument and other potential monuments where there is significant local opposition.

Slide 18. In November 2015, I introduced H.R. 3946 to block presidential abuse under the Antiquities Act.

Slide 19. I also recently led an appropriations effort to prevent this type of abuse through the appropriations process.

Slide 20. 32 members, including House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop, joined me in submitting this appropriations rider.

Slide 21. Last slide. This is a press release we sent in November after Grijalva introduced a bill with no cosponsors in another shameless attempt to provide cover for the administration should they pursue this designation. Think the message is pretty clear.

Going to be a fun hearing today and I'm confident that you will learn a lot if you stick around and pay attention. Thank you all again for coming out. With that, I yield back. {Jeff will then introduce Dwight Kadar and Mike Schroeder. }