

Statement by  
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**COMMITTEE FOR THE ARIZONA CATTLE GROWERS’**  
**ASSOCIATION**

With regard to  
**Congressman Paul Gosar’s**  
**Public Listening Session:**  
**“Government Land Grabs – Exposing the Truth”**  
**April 11, 2016**  
**Kingman, Arizona**

For the record, my name is Emmett J. Sturgill and I have been a lifelong resident of Northern Arizona and involved in managing lands and livestock here since 1974. In addition to my experience in the cattle business in this area – I was employed for 35 years with the Arizona Department of Public Safety. These experiences have provided me with the knowledge and understanding of lands, animals, laws and government agency operations.

We stand in opposition to the proposed Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument. This proposed National Monument – with the stroke of a pen – will dramatically damage our economy in Northern Arizona and will forever destroy economically viable ranching families, sportsmen opportunities, mineral exploration, energy opportunities and the general welfare of the areas in and around this 1.7 million acre proposed National Monument.

This proposed expansion of added regulatory jurisdiction – on such a broad landscape of Northern Arizona – is a covert attack on land access, viable natural resource production and the opportunity for us in Northern Arizona to live on, care for and produce food for our great nation and state in this area. The process for this proposed National Monument is devoid of local input from the communities, leaders, citizens and businesses in this area.

The proposed National Monument is following a disturbing trend that has emerged over recent years in land designations: It circumvents the usual route of involving our elected officials in the U.S. Congress and at our State Legislature; and it advances without the consent of our elected legislators or consultation with our state and local governments. While the Property Clause in our U.S. Constitution grants Congress the authority to make the bulk of land designations – by statutory provisions for forest designations, federal wilderness areas and the establishment of National Parks – the authority to designate national monuments has been delegated to the President under the Antiquities Act of 1906. This must change.

The Antiquities Act lacks significant standards for size, creating a high potential for abuse. Although Congress retains the ability to designate national monuments through statute, it principally relies on monument designations put forward by the Executive Branch. Between 1906 and 1999, Presidents designated 118 national monuments. Although Congress has limited the Act's reach in some respects, the federal courts have expanded and upheld every exercise of the Antiquities Act.

President Clinton took the Antiquities Act to new heights with the designation and expansion of more than 20 national monuments, many of which were opposed by local residents and landowners. The current administration is continuing this trend with nearly 20 monument designations, closing off millions of acres of in the west. In order to prevent this abuse of power, Congress should take steps to curb the President's ability to arbitrarily designate national monuments, and create a mechanism for congressional review of proclamations. Congress should also provide for state and local input before the designation takes place.

It is disturbing to us in Northern Arizona that the President is denying Arizona citizens a voice in the proposed designation of a national monument in our own backyard. Such a designation will have real impacts on the livelihoods of us citizens who actually live near and work on these lands. It will have a tremendous impact on outdoor sporting opportunities like hunting and target shooting as we have an example in central Arizona where the BLM has proposed to place an area within the Sonoran National Monument off limits to target shooting. The wishes of the people most affected by these types of designations are once again – being ignored.

We are disappointed in the Executive Branch's inability to use the Antiquities Act in a transparent and reasonable fashion. This proposed designation serves as the

latest example of why the Antiquities Act, first passed in 1906, is in serious need of updating.

These types of designations are top-down, big government land grabs that disenfranchise the concerned citizens that live, work and recreate in these areas. When we look at prior designated areas we see – the elimination and drastic reduction in livestock production, reduced opportunities for sportsmen and outdoor recreation, impacts on water rights and the overall reduction of our ability to manage challenges like wildfire limiting the ability of our first responders to react to these challenges. They become underfunded and neglected properties – this is the opposite of what we seek for these lands in Northern Arizona.

In closing, Congressman Gosar we implore you to carry forward with our message and we thank you for conducting this listening session as: When these areas are created without normal Congressional and local consensus, when they rob the people of a fair and open process stifling the input of the community – they become orphans once the Administration that designated them changes.

***Note:***

*Attached are four slides which illuminate: 1) The vast area of federally controlled lands already in Arizona (and the west) in red; 2) A Map of Arizona demonstrating the location of an already existing 18 National Monuments and 2.5 million acres in Arizona; 3) Points highlighting the lack of transparency and resulting management impacts; and 4) a Conclusion of three key points.*