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CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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United States Senate

May 27, 2016

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Dear Director Ashe:

I'm writing to insist that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) scrap its proposed boating restrictions near Lake Havasu, Arizona. This should be done immediately following the completion of the ongoing public comment period for the draft compatibility determination.

The Lake Havasu region is the most popular boating destination in Arizona. Motorized boating in particular is an essential part of the region's outdoor recreation economy. According to the Arizona Office of Tourism, visitors contribute to an economic output of \$252.8 million across Mohave County and support an estimated 3,766 jobs. An average holiday weekend, like the Memorial Day holiday, attracts an estimated 50,000 boaters.

Last week, Senator Flake and I authored an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2017 Transportation Appropriations Bill that sought to restrict USFWS access to approximately \$400 million in federal funds (most of which is derived from motorboat fuel taxes) if the USFWS moves forward with its proposed restrictions issued by Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. Although our amendment was not adopted, my work on this issue will continue until the community's objections are heard. Also, please be advised that there is an extensive, locally-led petition drive in the Havasu community in opposition to the draft compatibility determination—an effort that I fully encourage.

I understand that the federal guidelines may not allow the Service to withdraw the draft compatibility determination until the current comment period is closed. But, USFWS would do well to swiftly pull the draft compatibility determination as soon possible. Further, the USFWS should fully comply with the spirit of existing federal Memoranda of Understanding that call for consultation with Lake Havasu City, the Arizonan Game and Fish Department, Mohave County, the regional business community, and other stakeholders regarding its activities along the 17-mile Havasu stretch of the Colorado River.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,


John McCain
United States Senate