

To:  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Hearing:  
Tuesday, July 21, 2009 @ 10:00 a.m.

Written Testimony From:  
Clarinda T. Vail  
Properties Manager  
Red Feather, INC.  
& Tusayan Land and Cattle Company  
P.O. Box 1427  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Honorable Members of the Committee,

As a life long resident and third generation business owner in Tusayan, the gateway community located one mile south of the Grand Canyon National Park, I, many of my colleagues and local entities support H.R 644. We are concerned about potential uranium mining on public lands located in the Kaibab National Forest.

We do not believe that an area so close to such a natural wonder, as the Grand Canyon, should be open to mining on public lands. Mining on this federal property would negatively impact our area and I am in full support of a withdrawal of this land from mining.

The mining act of 1872, in my opinion, should be revised because it allows mining companies to run roughshod over public lands. Uranium mining would impact our area in many ways and provide no funds for the impacts they would cause to things such as schools, emergency services, fire protection and roads. Our area cannot afford more improvements on federal lands that do not pay property taxes to our local needs.

As president of our local school board of the only K-12 school inside of a national park, I know first hand the impact of the National Park Service Concessionaires conducting business on federal property without paying property taxes needed, both, for current operations and to pay off bonds that their past valuations were used for. It has created a massive tax burden, since these properties came off of the tax rolls a few years ago. Our local property owners cannot afford another burden like this. If companies want to do business of any kind, on federal property, they should pay for the impact they cause. When they don't pay property taxes, they have an unfair market advantage over the

companies on private property. This is an unfair market advantage that the federal government has created for them.

As an active citizen in my community, county, state and country I am appalled, almost in disbelief, that it is 2009 and mining companies are still allowed to mine on federal property without paying a penny to the federal government or the local entities. The mining act should be changed to make them pay as if they were on private property. If these companies are good corporate citizens they should offer it up, and agree this is the right thing to do.

There is only one Grand Canyon National Park. It is special, and the area should not be desecrated. When you look at a map of all of the test sites that the Kaibab National Forest Service is dealing with, in some form or another, even a small percentage of these becoming mines could be just too much for our area to handle for free.

I am also concerned that this large-scale mining will impact wildlife in the area. Unit 9, which is located in the Kaibab National Forest is an area known for producing world-class elk. The large acreage that could be affected would likely destroy habitat and disrupt wildlife populations and migration patterns. I would think that this mining would directly contradict the Arizona Game and Fish and Rocky Mountain Elk foundation goals for wildlife in the area. They have achieved many of these goals and paid for many improvements for the wildlife around Grand Canyon. The area is special to the wildlife. An EIS should be conducted on impacts to wildlife if these lands are not withdrawn from new mining development.

The area cannot handle a major influx of new residents. Housing is extremely limited near the Grand Canyon, mainly, because of all the federal property. Tusayan's private property taxes are already some of the highest in the state of Arizona, more recreational facilities are needed for just the current residents, phone and power needs are already stretched and our water is limited and valued like gold. Tusayan has done everything it can to conserve water with our expensive, A+ quality and award winning, reclaimed system. Tusayan has reduced its potable water usage by 50%. Caring about this precious natural resource should matter to us all and especially to this subcommittee. I don't know what all the impacts could be to water, but know that an EIS would be needed with regards to it if these lands were not removed.

We are a rural area with its entire economy based on tourism. The communities of Tusayan the Grand Canyon Village, and our entire region, are set up to accommodate those services. An EIS study would need to be conducted on the economic and road impact to the region, if this property were not removed. This would mean more costs for the Forest Service.

It is unknown what extra truck traffic could be created with this mining. I imagine extra semi truck traffic along the winding areas of HWY 180 or HWY 64. Highways that are already busy, especially during our high season months, with tourism related traffic.

Roads that don't have enough passing lanes for the motor homes and buses already on them.

All of these concerns make me think that government must do its job here, care what impacts they could be creating and care about the possible experience of the Grand Canyon being tarnished. The tourist experience means everything to us at Grand Canyon and it should mean the same to all of our elected leaders in the United States.

Thank you for bringing this issue to the forefront, for listening to my concerns, for your service to our great country and I am happy to answer any questions you may have of me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Vail". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Linda" is written with a large, looped 'L' and the last name "Vail" is written with a large, looped 'V'. The signature is centered horizontally within the block.