



September 2, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Manchin, Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Ranking Member Westerman:

The signatories to this letter write in opposition to the mineral withdrawal included in the House Natural Resources Committee's reconciliation bill. The "Grand Canyon" withdrawal, encompassing nearly 1,055,000 acres, perpetuates false claims of mining in one of our nation's most beautiful national parks. In addition, the withdrawal's inclusion in a reconciliation bill is clearly the wrong place for thoughtful consideration. It also fails to acknowledge our nation's alarming reliance on foreign sources of minerals and would further weaken the already vulnerable supply chains for key U.S. industry sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure, energy, and defense.

Federal lands – predominantly in the western U.S. – are the source of much of our nation's mineral endowment. Of these federal lands, half are either off limits or under restrictions to mineral development. While mining is certainly not appropriate on all federal lands, maintaining responsible access to the very resources that drive innovation, feed economic growth and improve our nation's quality of life is essential. Given the vast amount of federal lands already closed to mining operations, caution should be exercised when determining whether additional lands should be placed off limits.

The withdrawal language targets more than a million acres of mineral rich lands, including world-class uranium ore deposits that are located well outside the boundaries of the

Grand Canyon National Park. The park, as created, already includes a built-in buffer zone to protect park resources from activities taking place outside the park boundaries and an additional million-acre buffer zone is not justified. This language deliberately disregards our dangerous dependence on countries like Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to meet our nation's need for uranium to fuel our nuclear Navy and supply our nation's electricity.

Furthermore, the withdrawal language ignores not only the comprehensive framework of federal, state, and local environmental regulations that govern every aspect of mining, but the findings of the Department of the Interior that the park was not at risk from mining given these existing protections. In fact, the U.S. Geological Survey recently concluded that the nine uranium mines that have operated in northern Arizona since the 1970s (since modern environmental laws took effect) have caused no adverse impact to the environment or health. This unwise and unwarranted mineral withdrawal is bad public policy that ignores the vast sectors of our economy that depend upon a reliable and secure supply chain of responsibly sourced minerals and metals. It also puts President Biden's renewable goals at a risk, forcing domestic manufacturers of clean energy technologies to rely on increased imports of these materials.

Access to our nation's vast and diverse resources and fair regulatory policies that promote certainty in the mine permitting process are the elements of sound public policy that should be considered when addressing resource development on federal lands. The reconciliation bill is the wrong place to consider such harmful policies. Instead, we urge you to remove this provision and support policies that promote responsible resource development.

Sincerely,

American Exploration & Mining Association
Arizona Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Arizona Mining Association
National Mining Association
Women's Mining Coalition
Wyoming Mining Association