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News Release

June 27, 2024

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Groups Deliver more than 17,000 Petition Signatures to Governor Hobbs Urging Her to Shut Down Pinyon Plain Uranium Mine

Phoenix, AZ - Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, National Parks Conservation Association, Wild Arizona, Chispa Arizona, and HaulNo!, as well as Havasupai Tribal members, delivered more than 17,000 petition signatures to Governor Katie Hobbs today urging her to use her authority to close the Pinyon Plain uranium mine that threatens the waters of Grand Canyon and the Havasupai Tribe.

This comes after the groups, scientists, and many others [sent a letter to the governor in January](#), outlining the threats posed by this mine and asking for her assistance with its closure.

“The Havasupai Tribe, other Tribal leaders, and those who care about protecting Grand Canyon and its waters have fought the Pinyon Plain uranium mine for decades, because it threatens the waters of Grand Canyon and the Havasupai,” said Sandy Bahr, director for Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter. “Governor Hobbs can and should help shut down this mine as once the mine contaminates the groundwater, there is no way to clean it up. The best way to protect Grand Canyon and the people who depend on its waters is to move forward with closure of this mine.”

The Pinyon Plain mine, which began extracting uranium ore on January 8th, is seven miles south of Grand Canyon National Park and inside the newly designated Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. Although President Biden’s national monument designation permanently bans new mining claims and development inside the monument, it exempts preexisting claims with valid existing rights like the Pinyon Plain uranium mine.

“Neither industry nor regulators can guarantee that the Pinyon Plain uranium mine won’t irretrievably damage aquifers that feed Grand Canyon’s precious springs,” said Taylor McKinnon, Southwest director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “That’s not a risk worth taking. The Center stands with the Havasupai Tribe in requesting that Governor Hobbs close the mine now.”

The [petitions](#) delivered to the governor ask her to, "Please do everything you can to help protect the waters of Grand Canyon, the new national monument, and these waters that are essential to the existence of the Havasupai people. This mine should be closed before it creates irreversible harm."

"State Aquifer Protection Permits issued to Pinyon Plain mine relied in part on analyses employing scientific representations that were already shown to be inaccurate when the mine pierced a shallow aquifer," said Kelly Burke, executive director of Wild Arizona. "With as much as 10 million gallons per year being pumped from the mine shaft, ore extraction and stockpiling well underway, and recent geohydrological science pointing to real cause for concern for the waters, wildlife, and the Havasupai people of Grand Canyon, it is clear Governor Hobbs needs to move now to close Pinyon Plain mine."

"Several lines of recent scientific evidence indicate a potential threat of uranium mining near the Grand Canyon to the quantity and quality of springs in the Canyon," said David Kreamer, Professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and President of the International Association of Hydrogeologists.

The governor has not responded to the groups' January letter asking for her help to help close the mine. They hope the petition signatures from thousands of Arizonans and people around the country who care about Grand Canyon will catalyze Governor Hobbs to action.

"Chispa Arizona strongly opposes the Pinyon Plain uranium mine's operation in the recently protected Baaj Nwaavjo l'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument due to its significant environmental risks," said Vania Guevara, advocacy and political director with Chispa Arizona. "Mine approvals have historically neglected Tribal voices, minimized environmental dangers, and overlooked the potential for contaminating waters that communities depend on. The Pinyon Plain mine can cause irreparable damage to the aquifers below it and we stand with our indigenous relatives from the Havasupai Tribe in urging Governor Hobbs to prioritize the health and safety of Arizona's people and water by shutting down the mine."

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