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April 15, 2008

Domenick Carroll, Clerk  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands  
1333 Longworth HOB  
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. Carroll,

Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc., (GCRG) founded in 1988, is unique in that it provides a unified voice for river guides and river runners in defense of the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon. Our non-profit educational and environmental 501(c)(3) organization is comprised of over 1,600 individuals who are passionately dedicated to the continuing preservation of this national icon. Consequently, Grand Canyon River Guides' goals are to:

*Protect the Grand Canyon*  
*Provide the best possible river experience*  
*Set the highest standards for the guiding profession*  
*Celebrate the unique spirit of the river community*

With those goals in mind, Grand Canyon River Guides would like to take this opportunity to comment on uranium exploration and mining in the vicinity of the Grand Canyon and the possibility of having these lands withdrawn from mineral entry. We have reviewed the history of uranium mining in the area, the opinions and findings of scientists, and the statements of the experts and stakeholders who spoke recently at the special congressional hearing in Flagstaff, AZ. Based on that study and our own intimate experience and understanding of the canyon and surrounding region, we strongly encourage you to withdraw the lands around the Grand Canyon from consideration for uranium mining.

Each year about five million people visit the Grand Canyon. About twenty five thousand of them are interested, committed, and bold enough to take an overnight trip through the canyon on

the Colorado River. Some trips are more than two weeks. We lead them on these trips and share the experience with them. We see first hand how deeply the place affects people.

You've heard many reasons to disallow uranium mining in the vicinity of the canyon: the potential for radioactive and chemical contamination of the environment, the physical degradation that always accompanies such efforts, the health risks to people, and the affront to native traditions and understanding. Those reasons are all valid, and we agree with them.

But the heart of why we believe this land should be withdrawn from consideration for mining is simple: This is the Grand Canyon -- one of the "Seven Wonders of the World", a great American treasure, and the crown jewel of the national park system. These are some of our greatest public lands, owned by all of us, and held in our trust to care for and protect for future generations. It would be inexcusable for us to mar this place, to poison its waters, disregard tribal objections, harm the plants and animals that inhabit it, and pass the damage along to those who will follow us.

It's true that this nation needs the resources it mines from the land. Do we need them enough to risk scarring the Grand Canyon for thousands of years with radioactivity and heavy metals? No. Do the American people get fair value for treasured lands worked by private companies under absurdly outdated mining laws? Of course not. The representative of the mining company said there is enough uranium in the area for a three to five year mining effort. Is five years of making money worth fifty generations of regret? Absolutely not.

The Grand Canyon is one of the last great wild places left in the world. It's a treasure that will become increasingly valuable for that reason, if we take good care of it. At the heart of our organization is a strong stewardship ethic which we believe to be shared by any and all who have visited Grand Canyon and spent time in its depths. We therefore respectfully request that the lands surrounding Grand Canyon -- both the Tusayan Ranger District and the BLM lands in the Kanab Creek drainage and House Rock Valley -- should be expeditiously withdrawn from consideration for mineral entry. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

***Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc.***

Sam Jansen	President
Matt Herrman	Vice President
Lynn Hamilton	Executive Director
Erika Andersson	Board Member
Andy Hutchinson	Board Member
Emily Perry	Board Member
Deanna Sanderson	Board Member
Fred Thevenin	Board Member
Emma Wharton	Board Member