

## United States Senate

### **Statement by Senator Kyrsten Sinema on S. 387, The Grand Canyon Protection Act Public Lands, Forests, & Mining Subcommittee Legislative Hearing June 7, 2022**

Thank you, Chair Cortez-Masto and Ranking Member Lee, for holding this important hearing and including my bill introduced with Senator Kelly, S. 387, The Grand Canyon Protection Act for consideration.

Arizonans have long been responsible stewards of our air, land, and water and balancing the many and varied uses of our natural resources. Responsibly providing for our nation's energy and mineral security is critical, and Arizona leads the way in prioritizing an all-of-the-above energy approach. Our state is also home to some of our country's most beautiful spaces, including the Grand Canyon, and their natural beauty and recreational opportunities must be protected for future generations to enjoy and admire.

That is why I introduced S. 387, the Grand Canyon Protection Act, with Senator Kelly. This legislation would permanently prevent mining on more than one million acres of federal land near the Grand Canyon and require a study assessing the availability of domestically sourced uranium.

Grand Canyon National Park is a 1.2-million-acre national park designated as a national monument by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909 and officially designated as a national park by Congress in 1919. The canyon, formed by the Colorado River over millions of years, boasts breathtaking scenic beauty and is a major tourist attraction and economic engine in northern Arizona. Currently, the Grand Canyon welcomes more than six million visitors a year, contributes \$1.2 billion to local economies, and supports over 12,500 jobs in the region.

In addition, Northern Arizona communities – particularly the Tribes who have called the Colorado River and Grand Canyon home for hundreds of years – have too often borne the historical brunt of uranium mining and processing. The contamination that still affects the Navajo Nation is a prime example of this.

I understand the very real concerns about maintaining a robust and responsibly sourced supply of uranium for America's national defense and nuclear power generation, both of which I support. That is why this legislation includes the important provision directing the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of uranium stockpiles in the United States that are available to meet future national security requirements. This study will provide us in Congress the information we need to make informed policy decisions on future uranium demand needs, and supply availability to meet these demands.

It is our responsibility to be thoughtful stewards of our environment and its inhabitants. In the west, we are especially attuned to the challenges of balancing a wide range of local demands: conservation, recreation, economic development, ranching, and hunting, among others. As an outdoor enthusiast, I have great personal appreciation for the Grand Canyon and Arizona's many other natural treasures. Arizona's economy depends on protecting the Grand Canyon and ensuring it remains a safe and stunning part of our outdoor heritage for generations to come.

Chair Cortez-Masto and Ranking Member Lee, I look continue to work with you and all of my colleagues across the aisle to protect Arizona's natural treasures and preserve northern Arizona's unique way of life.

Thank you.