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Report Shows Arizona Lands Must Be Protected

The U.S. Senate and Congress need to pass the Grand Canyon Protection Act

A [report released by the Center for Western Priorities](#) today identified that only 879 acres of Arizona's federal public lands have been protected in the last decade. This is fewer acres than the footprint of Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport and translates to conserving less than 0.005 percent of the unprotected federal public lands currently open

The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, published this month, said it is now or never to limit climate warming. Unless efforts are accelerated to cut emissions from fossil fuels, the goal of limiting global warming by 2.7 degrees F, will likely be out of reach by the end of this decade. Protecting federal lands from harmful development is an important way for our nation to limit global warming.

Legislation sponsored by both of Arizona's U.S. Senators, Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly, alongside Representatives Raúl Grijalva, Ruben Gallego, Ann Kirkpatrick, Greg Stanton and Tom O'Halleran would permanently protect more than a million acres of land around the Grand Canyon and prohibit uranium mining in the area. According to a 2022 Conservation of the West poll conducted by Colorado College, 82% of Arizona voters support conserving federal public lands, protecting historic sites and safeguarding areas for outdoor recreation.

Northern Arizona has sustained Indigenous people for thousands of years and continues to hold significant cultural importance to tribes in the region, including the Havasupai, the Hopi, the Navajo and many others. The imminent threats of uranium mining and harmful development could have catastrophic consequences for these communities.

"Faith leaders see climate change as already impacting the health and livelihoods in our communities. It is vital that we stand together and protect more land in Arizona. Arizona Faith Network calls on Senators Kelly and Sinema to do everything they can to protect the Grand Canyon, including passing the Grand Canyon Protection Act," said Katie Sexton-Wood, Executive Director of the Arizona Faith Network.

To determine the amount of public lands protected over the last two decades, the Center for Western Priorities tallied the acreage of all permanently protected areas designated between 2000 and 2021. Permanently protected areas include wilderness areas, national wildlife refuges, national parks and national monuments and other lesser-known designations, like national conservation areas and mineral withdrawals.

Arizona Faith Network is an interfaith organization dedicated to bringing people together to promote peace and understanding through interfaith education and dialogue as well as healing of the world through collaborative social action.

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