

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

Upon visiting the Grand Canyon, President Theodore Roosevelt famously stated: *"Leave it as it is. You can not improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it."*

Roosevelt meant what he said – he took action to protect this natural wonder. In 1906, he established the Grand Canyon Game Preserve, Two years later, he proclaimed the 800,000-acre Grand Canyon National Monument.

Today, it is time for a new monument to protect the greater Grand Canyon region. North and south of Grand Canyon National Park is the Grand Canyon watershed region. The heart of this proposed national monument is the Kaibab Plateau, where the Colorado River carves its way through the Grand Canyon and provides water for millions of people in Arizona, Nevada, and California, as well as further downstream in Mexico.

The Kaibab Plateau is home to sensitive plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. The area is a corridor for iconic wildlife such as mountain lions and mule deer, and it is a habitat for imperiled species such as the California condor and desert tortoise. South of the Grand Canyon, the Coconino Plateau contains deep groundwater that supplies life-giving seeps and springs. This area is also culturally rich and contains sites, including Red Butte, that are special and sacred to Native American tribes.

Not only is the Grand Canyon region an environmental treasure, it is also an economic driver for northern Arizona and our entire state. In 2013, 4.5 million visitors spent nearly a half a billion dollars in the region, supporting more than 6,000 local jobs.

The Grand Canyon and its watershed deserve permanent protection from several existing and future threats. Uranium mining, for example, continues to threaten the water quality, wildlife, and intact habitat of the watershed. The region also lacks safe habitat connections between Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. And the old-growth ponderosa pine forests of the North Kaibab Plateau lack permanent protections from logging, which threatens native wildlife diversity and climate resiliency.

Protecting this region as a national monument will not only protect ancient forests, corridors for migratory wildlife and thousands of archeological sites, it will also support clean drinking water,

cultural heritage, and recreation. Native American tribes in the region have a deep connection to these lands and waters, so tribal consultations should be an important part of any efforts to establish a national monument.

We respectfully ask that you use your authority under the Antiquities Act to protect the Grand Canyon's watershed as a national monument. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress