



ARIZONA

others. It is unclear if they will include input from impacted communities by accepting public comment during its study period.

Department of Interior (DOI) has deemed uranium a “critical mineral” for “[economic national security](#)¹⁷” and some officials even went so far as to say that “[boundary adjustments](#)¹⁸” should be made to protected areas around the Grand Canyon to access mineral resources.

The Grand Canyon saw [6 million visitors](#)¹⁹ in 2017, a number that may be impacted by uranium mining. Mining and a decrease in visitation would impact the economic as well as cultural and ecological health of nearby communities. Uranium mining has been linked to high rates of lung cancer and other diseases in miners and nearby communities. These [human health impacts](#)²⁰ must not be overlooked when considering the expansion of U.S. uranium mining.

Native communities have experienced these impacts [at an even higher level](#)²¹, where 4 million tons of uranium were mined between 1944 and 1986. When the mining boom ended, companies abandoned 500 mines, leaving the waste to leach into the soils contributing to much higher death rates due to uranium toxicity in the Navajo people. The proposed Grand Canyon mine would have the [same impacts](#)²² to the Havasupai Tribe, an unacceptable consequence.

Land Management & Extraction - Uranium Mining

The Grand Canyon and public lands in northern Arizona have been threatened by uranium mining for decades. In 2012, the Obama administration issued a 20-year ban on uranium mining in the area; a conservation effort that former Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke wrongfully [took credit for](#)¹⁵. President Trump broke with this position and signalled support for renewed uranium mining near the Grand Canyon and in a region included in the original Bears Ears National Monument.

Under pressure from the uranium mining industry, the Trump administration has been looking for ways to prop up the industry. On July 12, 2019, the President [issued](#)¹⁶ an executive order creating a working group to make a recommendation regarding the future of domestic uranium production. The working group includes President Trump’s national security and economic policy advisors as well as Secretary Bernhardt among

Oil, Gas, & Coal

Just months after the public comment limiting Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2018-034 was issued in 2018, [three parcels](#)²³ containing just over 4,000 acres of land in northeast Arizona were nominated for a September oil and gas lease sale. The parcels sit near Petrified Forest National Park near the confluence of Silver Creek and the Little Colorado River.

The nomination and subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of potential impacts of the lease sale limited input from local voices. In August 2018, eight conservation organizations [filed a protest](#)²⁴ with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) stating that impacts to wildlife, groundwater, air quality, public health, and other uses of the public lands were not adequately considered due to a failure to complete a site-specific NEPA analysis and consider public input. Public input was not considered due to the voluntary nature of including public comment following IM 2018-034. This led to a unilateral BLM decision to lease the land, disregarding impacts to communities and the environment.