

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1690

To preserve the multiple use land management policy in the State of Arizona,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 12, 2011

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. KYL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. BAR-
RASSO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To preserve the multiple use land management policy in
the State of Arizona, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Northern Arizona Min-
5 ing Continuity Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) over the past 20 years, a form of low-im-
9 pact, safe, and environmentally responsible under-
10 ground “breccia pipe” uranium mining has been

1 conducted in northern Arizona, particularly in an
2 area located beyond the northern boundaries of the
3 Grand Canyon National Park known as the “Ari-
4 zona Strip”;

5 (2) according to United States Geological Sur-
6 vey estimates, the Arizona Strip—

7 (A) has the potential of becoming the sec-
8 ond most important uranium-producing region
9 in the United States; and

10 (B) contains approximately 375,000,000
11 pounds of high-grade uranium ore with the en-
12 ergy equivalent of 13,000,000,000 barrels of oil,
13 which is approximately the quantity of recover-
14 able oil originally found in Prudhoe Bay, Alas-
15 ka;

16 (3) in 1984, during the last uranium boom,
17 Congress enacted the Arizona Wilderness Act of
18 1984 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note; Public Law 98–406),
19 which—

20 (A) is recognized as a historic compromise
21 between environmental and uranium mining in-
22 terests; and

23 (B) affirmed the continued multiple use
24 management of Federal land on the Arizona

1 Strip that was not designated as wilderness by
2 that Act;

3 (4) continued development of resources on the
4 Arizona Strip would significantly boost economic
5 growth in the area, provide for permanent well-pay-
6 ing jobs, and serve as a source of revenue to the
7 Federal Government and State and local govern-
8 ments;

9 (5) on July 21, 2009, the Department of the
10 Interior published a notice entitled “Notice of Pro-
11 posed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meet-
12 ing; Arizona” (74 Fed. Reg. 35887), which—

13 (A) proposed the withdrawal of approxi-
14 mately 1,000,000 acres of Federal locatable
15 minerals in northern Arizona from the location
16 of new mining claims over concerns that the
17 uranium mining could impact the Grand Can-
18 yon watershed; and

19 (B) made no mention of the Arizona Wil-
20 derness Act of 1984 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note;
21 Public Law 98–406) or the resource manage-
22 ment plans that have governed mineral resource
23 development on the Arizona Strip; and

24 (6) the February 2011 Draft Environmental
25 Impact Statement for the proposed withdrawal de-

1 terminated there is no conclusive evidence from well
2 and spring sampling data that modern-day breccia
3 pipe uranium mining operations in the northern por-
4 tion of the Grand Canyon region has impacted the
5 chemical quality of groundwater in the regional-aqui-
6 fer.

7 **SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF PROPOSED MINING WITHDRAWAL**
8 **WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.**

9 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Except by express authorization
10 by Congress referencing this section and notwithstanding
11 any other provision of law, the Secretary of the Interior
12 shall not extend, renew, or issue a notice of segregation
13 or withdrawal of the public land and National Forest Sys-
14 tem land (including a portion of the land) described in
15 Public Land Order 7773 (76 Fed. Reg. 37826 (June 28,
16 2011)).

17 (b) **EFFECT OF NOTICE.**—Any notice of segregation
18 or withdrawal of the land described in subsection (a) shall
19 have no legal effect.

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