



## Your Winter Report

# ‘Yes, we canyon!’ Welcoming a new national monument

By Ellen Montgomery, director of our national public lands campaigns

With the stroke of a pen, last August the president established a new national monument on the threatened land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, permanently making this land off-limits to mining. This action protects about 900,000 acres of land from pollution.

We’re celebrating thanks to supporters like you who told President Biden that uranium mining doesn’t belong anywhere near this natural wonder.

## You never forget your first visit to the Grand Canyon

No matter where you live, or how long ago you visited, you never forget your first glimpse of the Grand Canyon’s majestic walls; the deep hues of red, orange, yellow and green that shift by the hour; and the seemingly unfathomable distances from the rim to the canyon floor.

The Grand Canyon isn’t just a wondrous beauty for visitors, it’s also critical for wildlife. The park’s 1,900 square miles and the surrounding area serve as an ecological refuge for many threatened and endangered species such as the California condor, the Mexican spotted owl and the little brown bat.

The Grand Canyon is too important to destroy with toxic mining. More than 600 uranium mining claims surrounding the park, some as close as 10 miles from the park boundary,



Staff collect photo petitions at the Grand Canyon in support of its permanent protection from toxic uranium mining.

threatened to contaminate the greater Grand Canyon area with radioactive pollution.

New mining would have brought in heavy equipment to dig massive pits or pump chemicals into the groundwater. That groundwater feeds a river that supplies drinking water to 40 million Americans. Any one of the operations could leak radioactive materials into groundwater, or pollute the air with radioactive dust, threatening local residents, park visitors, as well as wildlife—from bald eagles and bighorn sheep to Gila monsters and desert tortoises.

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Thanks  
for making it  
all possible

## California stakes new claim to clean energy leadership

On Oct. 7, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a number of major clean energy and climate bills into law.

The bills will help advance California toward the state's goal of 100% clean energy, clear the path for offshore wind power, open up highways to solar infrastructure, renew clean transportation funding, and hold oil companies accountable for their pollution.

(SB 49), which was authored by state Sen. Josh Becker. It passed with unanimous votes in both the California Senate and the Assembly, and the governor signed it into law in October.

SB 49 directs state agencies to evaluate the potential for solar energy, battery storage and transmission infrastructure alongside highways to help California meet its clean energy targets: to generate 90% of the state's electricity from clean energy sources by 2035 and 100% by 2045.

"California needs to supercharge our deployment of solar panels and battery storage, and this bill takes advantage of some of the best places to do just that," said Laura Deehan, Environment California state director.

## Proposed Chumash sanctuary would protect waters off central California coast

Waters off California's central coast should soon receive new federal protections. On Aug. 24, the Biden administration proposed to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

The proposed sanctuary, nestled between the existing Monterey Bay sanctuary to the north and the Channel Islands sanctuary to the south, would protect another hotspot for ocean life and biodiversity. The Chumash area contains unique seasonal "upwellings," currents that push deep waters up to the surface, creating an area rich in marine mammals, sea turtles, coral, fish, kelp and more.

"Creating the Chumash Heritage sanctuary would be wonderful news for sea otters, humpback whales and all wildlife that call the central California coastline home," said Environment California State Director Laura Deehan. "A big thank you to the Biden administration for this announcement and to the Northern Chumash Tribal Council for leading the way toward this proposal for decades."

A sanctuary designation would protect the area from offshore oil and gas drilling, and make new research funding available. We expect the designation to be finalized in 2024.

Get more updates on our work online at <https://environmentcalifornia.org>.

James Rivas



Environment California's Steven King advocates for solar in front of a UCLA solar panel installation.

Environment California sponsored five of the bills, led campaigns on several more, and organized public and legislative support for all of them.

"With today's action, Gov. Newsom cements California's clean energy leadership. As one of the biggest economies in the world, what we do here matters beyond our borders," said Laura Deehan, state director of Environment California.

"California has set ambitious clean energy goals, but getting there requires innovative thinking, a willingness to take risks, and action to jump-start clean energy adoption in the face of opposition from special interests. Our Legislature and governor have come through on all those counts. Now, it's time to put these important initiatives into action."

## You may soon see solar panels along California highways, thanks to bill we supported

California will unlock the clean energy potential of our abundant roadside land thanks to new legislation to encourage the installation of solar power infrastructure along the state's highways.

Environment California sponsored the bill



### Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment California or Environment California Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentCalifornia.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentCalifornia.org)



Deep Desert Photography via Shutterstock

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**‘Yes, we canyon!’**

For countless ecological, historical and cultural reasons, the Grand Canyon is too precious to risk the pollution that mining brings.

**A decade of advocacy and action**

For more than a decade, Environment California and our national network has worked with coalition partners to protect it permanently from mining and other polluting and extractive activities.

Back in 2012, we helped win a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining claims surrounding the park. A decade later, we joined the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition to call on President Biden to establish a national monument on these threatened lands.

We were up against opposition from the mining industry—but we were successful in making the case for permanent protection.

Our research documented the risks of uranium mining, including contaminated water,

airborne uranium dust and toxic chemicals.

Our organizers helped win the support of key constituencies and earned coverage in local and national news outlets.

Our national network delivered more than 29,000 petition signatures last summer, many from members like you, opposing uranium mining in the Grand Canyon to the Biden administration. And our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.

Thanks to President Biden and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland for designating the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. Congratulations to the tribes, our conservation community allies, outdoor business leaders and more who came together to help keep the Grand Canyon safe from dirty and dangerous uranium mining forever. And it's support from members and other environmentalists like you that allows us to defend our most special places from destruction.

*Our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.*



Staff

**Featured staff**



Kimball Nelson

Laura Deehan  
State Director

Laura directs Environment California's work to tackle global warming, protect the ocean, and stand up for clean air, clean water and open spaces. Laura served on the Environment California board for two years before stepping into the state director role. Most recently, she directed the public health program for CALPIRG, another organization in The Public Interest Network, where she led campaigns to get lead out of school drinking water and toxic chemicals out of cosmetics. Prior to that, Laura ran Environment California citizen outreach offices across the state and, as the Environment California field director, she led campaigns to get California to go solar, ban single use plastic grocery bags, and go 100% renewable. Laura lives with her family in Richmond, California, where she enjoys hiking, yoga and baking.



Environment California and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

3435 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 385  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
(213) 251-3688

# Environment California

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## Your 2024 Winter Report

### Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment California. We focus exclusively on protecting California's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Victory: California will restrict bee-killing pesticides

In October, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill to save the bees, making California the 10th state to restrict bee-killing neonicotinoids or "neonics," a class of pesticides harmful to bees.

"California is taking the sting out of an increasingly toxic environment for bees. We're thrilled that 1 in 4 Americans will now live in a state that has taken this action," said Laura Deehan, state director of Environment California.

This state-by-state action is vital. Bees are dying. A recent study found a dangerous decline for the western bumblebee and linked the decline to climate change, habitat loss and pesticides use.

This victory comes after Environment California delivered more than 35,000 petition signatures to Gov. Newsom's office in support of AB363 to help save the bees.

More than ten thousand of the signatures came from knocking on doors in neighborhoods across the state—from Sacramento to San Diego and the Bay Area to throughout L.A. County.

Your support of Environment California gives our team of researchers, advocates and organizers the resources we need to win protections for all bees.

*Environment California staff and supporters delivered more than 35,000 petition signatures to help save the bees.*



Andy Smith