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## **Franks Introduces Legislation to Protect Critical Uranium Mining in AZ from Obama Administration Ban**

July 1, 2010

Congressman Trent Franks (AZ-02) today, along with 30 other Members of the House, introduced H.R. 5665, bipartisan legislation that would prevent uranium mining in Arizona from being banned by the Obama Administration. Uranium is the key natural resource necessary to produce nuclear energy, and Arizona is home to the most significant uranium deposits in the United States. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has announced the Administration's intention to withdraw these lands from mineral entry, thereby making the U.S. even more dependent on foreign countries and worsening an already serious vulnerability in America's national security.

**Franks stated, "Considering President Obama's call for the construction of additional nuclear power plants, it is astonishing to me that the Administration would nevertheless move to ban uranium mining in the most significant known uranium ore reserves in America. Currently, over 90% of our operating reactors receive their uranium supply from *foreign countries*, many of whom are unfriendly to America and unsympathetic to American interests.**

**"By prohibiting exploitation of northern Arizona reserves, the Obama Administration strategically weakens America's long-term national security and our ability to be energy self-sufficient. It also seriously calls into question President Obama's supposed commitment to increase our domestic nuclear energy production in order to protect America's national security."**

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, northern Arizona reserves total 326 million pounds or enough uranium to power the entire state of Arizona for 79 years. Arizona deposits range from 0.7 % to 3% grade uranium—by far the best quality reserves anywhere in the continental U.S.

In 1984, Congress passed the Arizona Wilderness Act, which specifically recognized the uranium potential of 490,000 acres of BLM lands and 50,000 acres of Forest Services lands by releasing them from wilderness study classification so they could be mined. The bill was a collaborative effort that included the mining and livestock industries, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, and the Sierra Club. To this day, uranium mining activities on these lands have a record of productive operation and successful reclamation without impacting the environment or National Parks.

*Congressman Franks is serving his fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, and is a member of the [Committee on Armed Services](#), Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee, Military Readiness Subcommittee, [Committee on the Judiciary](#), Constitution Subcommittee, and is Ranking Member on the [Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law](#).*

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