

REFERENCE TITLE: recreational shooting; Sonoran Desert Monument

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SCM 1018

Introduced by
Senator Griffin (with permission of Committee on Rules)

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO
PUBLIC RECREATIONAL SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SONORAN DESERT NATIONAL
MONUMENT.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Director of the United States Bureau of Land Management:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, article II, section 26, Constitution of Arizona, recognizes
4 the right of citizens to bear arms by stating that "[t]he right of the
5 individual citizen to bear arms in defense of himself or the state shall not
6 be impaired." Likewise, the Second Amendment to the United States
7 Constitution safeguards the "right of the people to keep and bear arms"; and

8 Whereas, in order for the citizens of this state to exercise a
9 meaningful constitutional right to arms guaranteed by their state and federal
10 constitutions, they must have readily available venues to practice and hone
11 their shooting skills, as they have since territorial days; and

12 Whereas, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 and the Federal
13 Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) legally prohibit the federal
14 land management agencies from affecting the state's jurisdiction and
15 responsibilities; and

16 Whereas, FLPMA establishes a multiple-use mission for public lands
17 under the jurisdiction of the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM);
18 and

19 Whereas, recreational target shooting is recognized as a highly valued
20 activity that has been enjoyed by multiple generations of Arizonans on public
21 lands, including the Sonoran Desert National Monument; and

22 Whereas, federal lands make up 42% of Arizona, and more than 43% of
23 those lands have special land use designations that prescribe significant
24 restrictions to recreational opportunities; and

25 Whereas, the United States District Court in Arizona has ordered the
26 BLM to temporarily close 10,599 acres of the Sonoran Desert National Monument
27 to recreational target shooting; and

28 Whereas, due to a ruling from the United States District Court issued
29 in March 2015, the BLM will develop new management actions to address
30 recreational target shooting in the Sonoran Desert National Monument Draft
31 Resource Management Plan; and

32 Whereas, BLM lands have traditionally been intended to accommodate
33 multiple uses, including recreational shooting, plinking, hunting, hiking,
34 biking, rock climbing, bird-watching, off-road vehicle travel and camping,
35 without jeopardizing the public safety; and

36 Whereas, the importance of hunting and recreational shooting as a
37 gateway to hunting are recognized in 2006 Executive Order 13443,
38 "Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation," which called
39 for the development of a "Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Resource
40 Conservation Plan" and a ten-year implementation plan; and

41 Whereas, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission has long supported and
42 advocated for responsible and environmentally sound recreational shooting for
43 the purpose of promoting marksmanship, public safety, hunter education,
44 competition and lawful hunting; and

1 Whereas, more than 269,000 hunters in Arizona, who spend \$341,668,000
2 annually in pursuit of outdoor activities, currently use BLM lands as areas
3 to safely and responsibly sight-in their firearms and engage in the practice
4 of their hunting skills, ensuring the safe and humane harvest of game
5 animals; and

6 Whereas, the sale of sporting arms and ammunition generates vital
7 funding for conservation efforts in Arizona and across the United States
8 through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, a fundamental
9 component of the American System of Wildlife Conservation Funding; and

10 Whereas, the availability of recreational shooting opportunities is key
11 to the recruitment and retention of recreational shooters and the shooting
12 tradition; and

13 Whereas, the Sonoran Desert National Monument Draft Resource Management
14 Plan states that continued changes in Arizona are straining the limits of
15 where and how recreational target shooting can be accommodated; and

16 Whereas, the BLM has committed to engage public and private
17 stakeholders in discussions of collaborative options and acceptable
18 solutions; and

19 Whereas, the BLM has received letters of comment from nongovernmental
20 organizations representing sportsmen and sportswomen engaged in hunting and
21 recreational shooting, as well as wildlife conservation organizations, the
22 Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage
23 Conservation Council, recognizing and appreciating the values and objectives
24 that the Sonoran Desert National Monument was created to protect and
25 emphasizing the necessity of finding a balance between protecting the
26 monument's resources and providing for recreational opportunities; and

27 Whereas, in its environmental analysis, the BLM Draft Resource
28 Management Plan made a strong case for keeping some number of shooting sites
29 open; and

30 Whereas, the BLM has numerous partners that have already offered
31 assistance and expertise in identifying existing or new sites that provide
32 safe shooting recreation in the Sonoran Desert National Monument while
33 protecting its resources.

34 Wherefore your memorialist, the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of
35 Representatives concurring, prays:

36 1. That the United States Bureau of Land Management consider the
37 economic and social benefits inherent in recreational shooting in Arizona and
38 across the United States.

39 2. That the United States Bureau of Land Management recognize that
40 opportunities for recreational shooting are being increasingly threatened by
41 urbanization and that the availability of federal lands is vital to the
42 continuation of the recreational shooting tradition.

1 3. That the United States Bureau of Land Management take steps to
2 maintain access to public recreational shooting opportunities in the Sonoran
3 Desert National Monument and complete a cumulative impact analysis on
4 recreational target shooting as a legal, valid and compatible recreational
5 activity on the monument and other monuments in Arizona.
6 4. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit a copy
7 of this Memorial to the Director of the United States Bureau of Land
8 Management.