

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 13, 2017

Ms. Chris Lehnertz
Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Dear Superintendent Lehnertz:

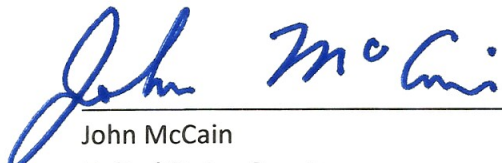
We write to request a status update on the Bison Management Plan at Grand Canyon National Park (GRCA) and the Draft Environmental Assessment for Initial Bison Herd Reduction.

As you know, approximately 600 bison roam inside Grand Canyon National Park and Kaibab National Forest. These bison are known to trample native vegetation, natural springs, and sensitive grasslands, as well as pose a public safety risk for visitors. The bison population is expected to double within the next seven years.

We are concerned about the length of time it is taking GRCA to develop a plan to reduce the herd using volunteer hunters in coordination with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. A Bison Management Plan has been under public scoping since 2014. However, in a letter dated April 13, 2015, from NPS Director Jon Jarvis to Senator Lisa Murkowski, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the NPS stated that a Draft EIS on the Bison Management Plan would be out for public comment by the fall of 2015. Similarly, we received reports that the EA for Initial Bison Herd Reduction could be potentially completed by December 2016. Yet, we are to understand that GRCA continues to debate the management status of the bison with its cooperators at the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

You will recall that during the 114th Congress we introduced a bill to authorize and direct the National Park Service to implement a bison control plan that utilized lethal culling of bison in coordination with state wildlife officials as well as allowing hunters to remove bison meat from the GRCA. We would appreciate a status update on your Bison Management Plan and the Initial Bison Herd Reduction action as we evaluate our legislative options for the 115th Congress.

Sincerely,


John McCain
United States Senator


Jeff Flake
United States Senator