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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Letter from U.S. Reps. Gosar, Biggs, Franks  
and Western Congressional Caucus about National Monuments  
full of errors and mendacities; doesn't reflect will of the people**

PIMA COUNTY – Sharon Bronson, chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors has sent a letter to U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to provide the agency accurate information about the Ironwood Forest and Sonoran Desert National Monuments and respond to the error-filled letter sent to Secretary Zinke by U.S. Reps. Paul Gosar, Andy Biggs, Trent Franks and other members of the Congressional Western Caucus.

The three Arizona Congressmen joined 11 other members of the CWC in a letter supporting Interior Department's review of 27 national monuments created since 1996 that was ordered by President Donald Trump in April. The three specifically requested that four monuments in Arizona be revoked: Sonoran Desert, Vermillion Cliffs, Grand Canyon-Parashant, and Ironwood Forest, which is in Pima and Pinal counties.

Bronson told Zinke that the Congressmen not only didn't seem to know where some of the monuments were – claiming the Sonoran Desert monument “abuts” the Mexican border when it's 100 miles north of the border – they had little idea as to how the monuments were managed or what the permitted public uses of National Monuments were.

“[T]he CWC seems to have little understanding of, or interest in, how these monuments are actually managed on the ground or what activities are allowed on monument lands. Intentionally or otherwise, the CWC asserts several outright falsehoods in its justification for rescinding the IFNM, relying on incorrect information regarding its management, which frankly calls into question all of the recommendations made in this poorly researched letter,” Bronson wrote in her July 10 letter.

Bronson also chastised the Caucus members from Arizona for failing to contact her as Chair of the Board of Supervisors to seek input from constituents who benefit from the Ironwood Forest's protection as a National Monument.

“[The letter’s authors didn’t] inquire as to what impacts to our local economy or environment would result if these monuments were eliminated. Instead, their lack of contact demonstrates they have no regard or respect for the broad interests of their constituents whom these elected officials are supposed to represent,” Bronson wrote.

The Board of Supervisors in May passed a resolution opposing the attempt to revoke federal protections of the 27 National Monuments under review as a result of the Executive Order.

Pima County played a vital role in Ironwood Forest being designated a National Monument in 2000. Biological studies made as part of the county’s Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan identified parts of the Silverbell Mountains as having high levels of “species richness” and numerous cultural resource sites. The County advocated for federal protection of the area as a result, including National Monument status.

Pima County’s vast and beautiful natural areas are big drivers of the regional tourist economy. Tourism in Pima County is responsible for 24,000 jobs and \$2.24 billion in annual direct spending.

The May resolution stated, “Should the Ironwood Forest National Monument be eliminated or reduced in size, Pima County could expect less tourism based on outdoor recreation, fewer visitors, diminished economic benefits and less in state and local tax receipts and benefits to the local economy.”

Chair Bronson referred to the Board’s resolution when concluding her letter to Zinke, “Pima County supports retaining the full text and authorities of the 1906 Antiquities Act as one of the nation’s most important conservation laws to safeguard and preserve public lands. As Chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, I strongly affirm Pima County’s continued support for the designation of the Ironwood Forest National Monument and all other designated National Monuments in Arizona.

The public comment period for the Antiquities Act and National Monument review ended July 10.

END