



Contact: Louella Nahsonhoya
The *Hopi Tutuveni*
(928) 734-3283
LNahsonhoya@hopi.nsn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 5, 2012

HOPI LEADERS STRONGLY OPPOSE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAND CANYON ESCALADE

Kykotsmovi, Ariz. - At a recent Tribal Council meeting, Hopi leaders unanimously agreed to approve Resolution H-113-2012, in which they formally state their position to strongly oppose the development of a commercial initiative at the Grand Canyon called the "Grand Canyon Escalade".

The Hopi people continue to have connections to their ancestral past, including the landscapes, ruins, ceremonial trails, shrines, springs and rivers. The Hopi and many other southwestern Tribes, as well as members of the Navajo Tribe, hold the Grand Canyon (Öngtupqa) and its cultural contributories, a sacred place of reverence and respect. Hopi religious leaders and the Hopi people in general, also strongly oppose this development.

"The Canyon is still regularly visited by Hopis to deposit prayer offerings in the area of the confluence, so this development will adversely affect the sacredness of this special place", said Leigh Kuwanwisiwma Director of the Hopi Tribe's Cultural Preservation Office. "Because of the significance of Öngtupqa, it is extremely important for the Hopi people to preserve and protect this area from harm and wrongful exploitation."

Hopi Vice Chairman Herman G. Honanie said "the proposed development located at the confluence is unacceptable to Hopi religious leaders, practitioners and the Hopi people as it will significantly and forever adversely impact Hopi sacred places to which Hopis have aboriginal title and use".

"This development will forever compromise the tranquility and sacredness of all the surrounding area. The Hopi people and the Hopi Tribal Council strongly oppose the development of the Grand Canyon Escalade and will continue to advocate for protection of Öngtupqa and all its elements" said Hopi Chairman LeRoy N. Shingoitewa. "The Hopi Tribal Council calls upon the Pueblo of Zuni, Navajo People, and other tribes to which the Grand Canyon is sacred, the National Congress of American Indians, Inter-tribal Council of Arizona, All Indian Pueblo Council and the National Park Service to join in opposing this development and collectively support legislation to protect the Grand Canyon and other Native American sites".

Confluence Partners LLC, represented by Albert Hale and supported by Navajo President Ben Shelly, proposed the development of the Grand Canyon Escalade to include a river walk and restaurant at the bottom of the Grand Canyon confluence, where the Colorado and Little Colorado Rivers meet. A main feature of the proposed development is to build a luxury resort/spa at the northeast rim along with a tram which would take tourists down to the river and stop at the restaurant. A river walk will give a view of the confluence.

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