

# GRAND CANYON TRUST

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## Uranium Mill Problems Provoke Legal Notice

SALT LAKE CITY, UT— Ongoing violations of the Clean Air Act at the nation's only operating uranium mill have prompted Grand Canyon Trust to file a 60-day notice of intent to sue Energy Fuels Resources, the owner of the White Mesa Mill, located near White Mesa and Blanding, Utah.

The notice alleges and cites data showing that in 2012 and 2013 the annual average radon-222 emissions at the mill exceeded hazardous air pollutant standards. Exposure to radon-222 is linked to cancer, genetic defects, and increases in mortality. It further alleges that, during that same time period, mill owners operated six tailings impoundments when only two are allowed, and that two of those are larger than the maximum allowed size of 40 acres.

If a lawsuit is required to remedy problems, the Trust will ask a federal district court to impose upon Energy Fuels appropriate injunctive relief, civil penalties of up to \$37,500 per day per violation, mitigation, and other costs.

"Our position is simple: Radiological pollution is dangerous, and uranium milling must comply with laws lessening that danger," said Anne Mariah Tapp, attorney with Grand Canyon Trust.

Citing poor market conditions, Energy Fuels in December announced that it plans to close the mill in 2014 and potentially reopen it 2015. It also announced that it would shutter its Pinenut mine, located just north of Grand Canyon and, pursuant to a [legal agreement](#) with Grand Canyon Trust, the Havasupai Tribe and others, cease efforts to open its controversial Canyon mine.

"The mill's closure presents Energy Fuels an opportunity to remedy problems," said Tapp. "Those problems must be fixed before it reopens."

The mill produces "yellowcake;" the pollution stems from processing and storing mined ore and radioactive waste called "alternate feed" that is collected from sites across the U.S.

People and communities continue to be impacted by the Colorado Plateau's uranium legacy, which includes thousands of abandoned mine sites, polluted soil, air, and water. Federally funded uranium mill cleanups have been required near Moab, Tuba City, Shiprock, Mexican Hat, Monticello, and Uravan. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, whose reservation includes land just a few miles from the mill, has repeatedly [voiced concern](#) over the mill's air, dust and water pollution.

"Communities and taxpayers for decades have shouldered the high costs of radiological pollution in our region," said Taylor McKinnon, director of energy with Grand Canyon Trust. "It's one of America's worst environmental injustices, and it's imperative that we now fix rather than further that legacy."

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To download a copy of today's notice, click [here](#).

*The mission of the Grand Canyon Trust is to protect and restore the Colorado Plateau—its spectacular landscapes, flowing rivers, clean air, diversity of plants and animals, and areas of beauty and solitude.*

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