

JEFF FLAKE
ARIZONA

SR-413 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 224-4521
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0305

STATE OFFICES:
2200 EAST CAMELBACK ROAD
SUITE 120
PHOENIX, AZ 85016
(602) 840-1891

6840 NORTH ORACLE ROAD
SUITE 150
TUCSON, AZ 85704
(520) 575-8633

June 13, 2016

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Ashe,

I write regarding the *Havasu National Wildlife Refuge Draft Compatibility Determination for Recreational Boating* (draft determination) announced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“USFWS,” “Service”) April 12, 2016.

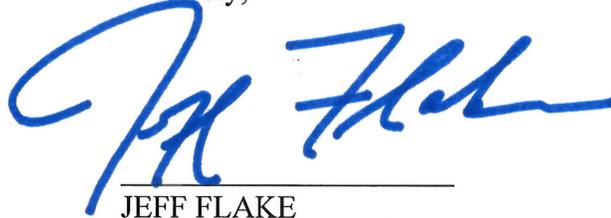
I was pleased to learn that, in response to public requests, the USFWS held public hearings and extended the comment period for this draft determination. However, I urge USFWS to consider the substantial public opposition that has been voiced and amend this onerous and unclear rule restricting recreational boating.

Lake Havasu and the National Wildlife Refuge are important to the regional economy, and those whose businesses depend on boating, recreation, and tourism would be heavily affected. The draft determination rightly asserts that Lake Havasu is the most utilized boating lake in Arizona, and the Refuge sees as many as 3 million visitors each year. Boating, lake tours, and waterskiing are main attractions on the lake. Furthermore, Lake Havasu City sees visitors that contribute approximately \$252.8 million in economic impact through expenditures according to a 2008 survey by the Arizona Office of Tourism. These visitors result in a total of 3,766 direct and indirect jobs in the area. Recreation on the Lake, including Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, is a pillar of the local economy that provides the basis for the livelihood of many Arizonans.

Unfortunately, the new restrictions are vague and confuse the differences between existing and proposed restrictions. Furthermore, USFWS has imposed these new regulations with minimal stakeholder consultation. At a minimum, the Service should have engaged the signatory parties to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding for the regional administration of Lake Havasu. If given the opportunity, these groups could have provided valuable feedback on the draft determination prior to its publication that may have helped USFWS avoid the current negative public outcry.

I urge the USFWS to take a fresh approach and engage in consultation with local governments, stakeholders, and affected individuals. The stakes for Arizonans who depend on Lake Havasu for their livelihoods are considerable. I appreciate your prompt consideration of this request. As always, I ask that this matter be handled in strict accordance with all agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Flake', is written over a horizontal line.

JEFF FLAKE
United States Senator