



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Requested Board Meeting Date: 5/20/2025

*= Mandatory, information must be provided

Click or tap the boxes to enter text. If not applicable, indicate "N/A".

***Title:**

RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OPPOSING THE REDUCTION OF IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT (IFNM) BOUNDARIES FOR RESOURCE EXTRACTION

***Introduction/Background:**

The Trump Administration has proposed shrinking the size of multiple national monuments across the United States, including the IFNM in Pima and Pinal Counties for the purpose of opening these areas to resource extraction. The Board supported designation of the IFNM in June 2000 as it forms an integral part of the connected landscape of Pima County, including protected federal, state, and local lands.

***Discussion:**

This resolution reaffirms Pima County's support for the designation of the original boundary of the IFNM, consistent with the findings and objectives of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. It describes the extraordinary ecological and cultural values of the resources within the monument, and it recognizes IFNM's contributions to the travel and tourism industry in both Pima and Pinal Counties.

***Conclusion:**

The resolution directs the County Administrator to communicate Pima County's opposition to shrinking the boundaries of IFNM and opening of those areas to resource extraction and potential development. It emphasizes Pima County's support for mining reform and record of supporting mining projects that adhere to local health, safety, and conservation guidelines.

***Recommendation:**

Approval of Resolution opposing the reduction of IFNM boundaries for resource extraction.

***Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

***Board of Supervisor District:**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ All

Department: Conservation Lands and Resources

Telephone: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Contact: Kris Gade, Director

Telephone: 520-724-6451

Department Director Signature:

Krista Gade

Date: 5/1/2025

Deputy County Administrator Signature:

[Signature]

Date: 5/2/2025

County Administrator Signature:

Date: 5/2/2025

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-__

**RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OPPOSING THE REDUCTION OF IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT
BOUNDARIES FOR RESOURCE EXTRACTION**

WHEREAS on June 9, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed Presidential Proclamation 7320 designating the establishment of the Ironwood Forest National Monument (the IFNM) on over 100,000 acres of public lands in Pima and Pinal Counties in Arizona, to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and

WHEREAS, the IFNM contains objects of scientific interest throughout its Sonoran Desert environment, including saguaros and stands of ironwood and palo verde trees that blanket the monument floor beneath the rugged Silver Bell Mountains and Ragged Top Mountain, a biological and geological crown jewel of the IFNM; and

WHEREAS, the Ironwood Tree, which can live for over 800 years, is the dominant nurse plant in this region for saguaro cactus and other understory plant species; and

WHEREAS, the Ironwood Tree provides a variety of habitat features for other species, including roosting sites for hawks and owls, forage for desert bighorn sheep, protection for saguaros against freezing, burrows for tortoises, flowers for native bees and other pollinators, dense canopy for nesting of white-winged doves and other birds, and protection against sunburn for night blooming cereus; and

WHEREAS, the Silver Bell Mountains support the highest density of ironwood trees recorded in the Sonoran Desert; and Ragged Top Mountain contains the greatest richness of species in the Sonoran Desert, with the IFNM's ironwood-bursage habitat associated with more than 674 species, including 64 mammalian and 57 bird species; and

WHEREAS, the IFNM is a critical corridor for wildlife movement, connecting seven mountain ranges and serving as the core habitat for the region's last indigenous herd of desert bighorn sheep in the Waterman Mountains; and

WHEREAS, the IFNM is an integral part of the connected landscape of Pima County, which includes protected federal, state, and local government lands that conserve Sonoran Desert habitat and wildlife corridors and further the goals of Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the IFNM safeguards an extraordinary cultural heritage, encompassing thousands of years of human history reflected in Ancestral Native American archaeological sites, petroglyphs, ancient habitation areas, and traditional cultural places that are sacred to Native American tribes, including the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and whose continued preservation is essential to maintaining the cultural identity and historical continuity of these communities; and

WHEREAS, IFNM is an important contributor to the travel and tourism industry in both Pima and Pinal Counties, with an estimated 100,000 visitors each year; and

WHEREAS, on April 24, 2025, it was reported that the Trump Administration is proposing to shrink the size of multiple national monuments across the United States, including the IFNM, for the specific purpose of opening these areas to resource extraction; and

WHEREAS, should the IFNM be reduced in size for resource extraction, mining companies would be allowed to gain access to former IFNM lands at the expense of all other uses, including recreation, tourism, conservation, watershed protection, climate mitigation, traditional uses by Tribal Nations, cultural and historic preservation, and other uses that contribute significantly to the local, state, and national economies; and

WHEREAS, should the IFNM be reduced in size for resource extraction, the introduction of mining infrastructure such as access roads, heavy machinery, artificial lighting, and non-stop noise would devastate the surrounding native ecosystems and sever landscape connectivity in this area; and

WHEREAS, should the IFNM be reduced in size, Pima County would experience the loss of protections for the IFNM's natural resources and cultural and historic sites that would lessen the effectiveness of landscape level protections and objectives of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Pima County Board of Supervisors:

1. Reaffirms its support for the national designation of the IFNM consistent with the findings and objectives of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.
2. Concludes that the IFNM and all designated National Monuments deserve to be safeguarded and retained as proclaimed under the 1906 Antiquities Act.
3. Calls on Arizona's Congressional Designation to retain the full designation and protections afforded to the IFNM.
4. Directs the County Administrator and the County's Federal lobbyists to take the necessary measures to communicate Pima County's opposition to the shrinking of boundaries of the IFNM and the subsequent opening of areas within the IFNM to resource extraction, mining exploration, and potential development.
5. Directs communications to Pima County's Congressional delegation and the Trump Administration to also emphasize Pima County's ongoing support for meaningful and comprehensive mining reform and Pima County's record of supporting mining projects within Pima County that adhere to local health, safety, and conservation guidelines.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors, Pima County, Arizona, this 20th day of May, 2025.

Rex Scott, Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Melissa Manriquez, Clerk of the Board



Bobby Yu, Deputy County Attorney