



September 12, 2013

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

The Society of American Archaeology (SAA) is pleased to join Archaeology Southwest, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and many other organizations in strong support of Rep. Grijalva's H.R. 1348, the Great Bend of the Gila National Monument Establishment Act of 2013, which is now pending before the subcommittee. This legislation is needed to provide increased protection for, and appropriate management of, enormously important archaeological resources.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,000 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 of the United States, as well as many other nations around the world.

The Gila River corridor in Arizona's Maricopa and Yuma Counties was a vital conduit for trade and travel, from prehistoric times through the early 20th Century. The numerous peoples who passed through and settled along the river over the millennia have left behind some of the richest cultural resources to be found anywhere. These materials include settlement sites, trails, petroglyphs, and other remnants of human activity.

H.R. 1348 would allow the Bureau of Land Management to administer the 131 square miles of public lands in question as an integrated cultural heritage landscape. Doing so will better preserve and protect these fragile and irreplaceable assets, so that present and future generations of Americans may learn more about our shared history of North America, and the lives of those who came before us.

We respectfully request that the subcommittee consider H.R. 1348 as quickly as possible.
Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Altschul".

Jeffrey Altschul, Ph.D., RPA
President