



Mining and You

by David F. Briggs

All Jobs are Important

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Multiple Land Use Doctrine as described by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 ensures that our public lands and their various resource values will be utilized in the combination which best meets the present and future needs of the American people. It also guarantees that our public lands will be made available for all uses including a wide range of commercial activities as well as being preserved for its watershed, fish and wildlife, natural scenic, scientific and historical values.

However, some have urged that mining, oil and gas development, logging and ranching should no longer be permitted on our public lands, because these activities are believed to be detrimental to recreational activities and tourism.

How does placing restrictions designed to benefit one industry to the detriment of others best meet the needs of all Americans?

Many communities throughout the west that are dependent on tourism have not fully recovered from the Great Recession of 2008, because many potential patrons who might visit these areas have little disposable income. I don't know about you, but most people I know don't go on a vacation, when they are having trouble providing the necessities for their families.

How does making it more difficult for unemployed Americans to find work, help many communities throughout the west, who are dependent on tourism?

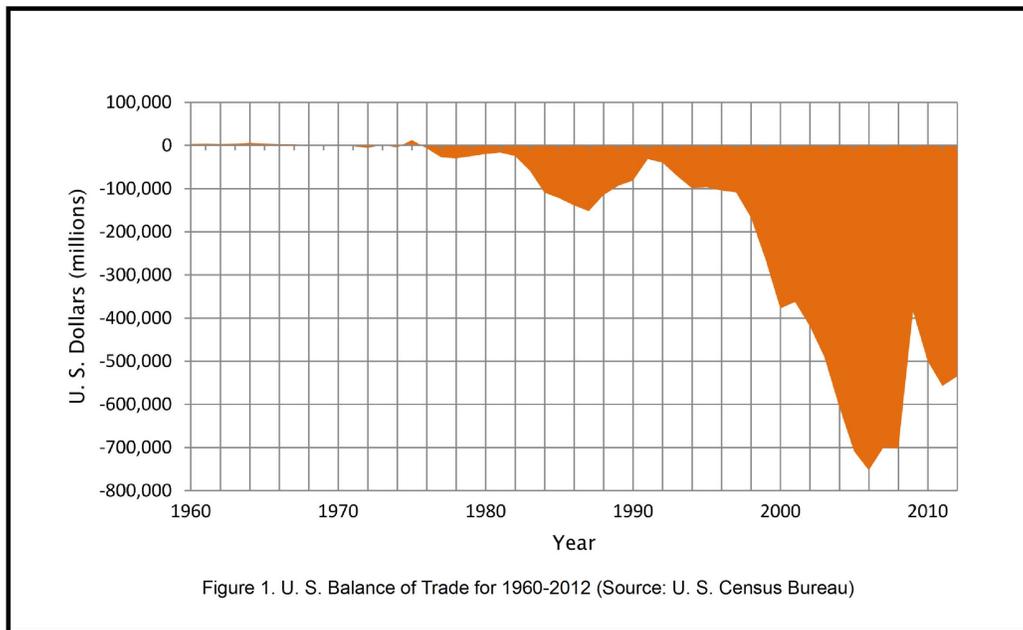
With much of our nation's public lands being concentrated in the western United States and Alaska, any restrictions of this type would not only have serious consequences for the citizens of this region, but would also severely impair our ability as a nation to provide the goods we require to ensure our national security and maintain and improve our standard of living and infrastructure.

Studies have shown that communities, which have a diverse mixture of extraction, manufacturing and service sector jobs weather business cycles better than those that are dependent on a single industry.

How does enacting policies that make the economies of our western communities less diversified benefit our nation?

All Americans benefit from the products derived from the mining, petroleum, timber and ranching industries. The lifestyle we all enjoy, including the recreational activities and tourism some are purportedly attempting to benefit, would not be possible, if it were not for the products derived by these extractive industries.

If we establish artificial barriers that restrict our ability to develop these domestic resources, our only option left will be the importation of these products from abroad. This only increases our dependence on foreign goods, expanding America's already unsustainable trade deficits (see Figure 1) that have slowly but relentlessly transferred much our nation's existing wealth overseas.



Each dollar we spend on imported goods is one less dollar we have to invest in America's economic future. Many of our nation's current economic problems, including our persistently high unemployment rates, are a direct result of the cumulative impacts from these excesses.

America's unsustainable trade deficits cannot be reduced by limiting the types of commercial activities that are permitted on our public lands. Without a domestic source to supply these goods, service sector jobs, like those provided by the tourism industry continue to consume products that are imported from abroad, increasing our nation's trade deficits. Service sector

industries only redistribute existing wealth. They are incapable of creating the new wealth required to restore our nation's economic prosperity. Our nation's existing multiple land use policy is one of the tools we can use to accomplish this goal.

Disclaimer: David Briggs is a resident of Pima county, Arizona and a geologist, who has worked in the mining industry for more than 35 years.

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Originally published by Mining and You in the Tucson Citizen on January 15, 2014.