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## **Arizona Rock Products Association News Release – November 8, 2019**

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### *Congressman Stanton Supports*

#### ***Rebuilding Our Communities by Keeping aggregates Sustainable (ROCKS) ACT***

Phoenix, Arizona – Stone, sand and gravel is an essential raw material found in every home, building, road, bridge and public works project. And, although over 22,000 pounds of aggregates are used by every man, woman and child in America, many people have no understanding of where these products originate, and the lengths producers go to safely produce and deliver these critical materials in an environmentally responsible manner.

Congressman Greg Stanton of Phoenix, Arizona and former Mayor of the City of Phoenix recognizes that in many areas of the country, communities have failed to recognize the importance of locally available aggregate resources and purposefully or inadvertently prohibited aggregate mine development or allowed community development to overlay or encroach upon valuable aggregate deposits.

The Arizona Rock Products Association (ARPA) worked with city planners in Phoenix and other jurisdictions to avoid eliminating access to this important construction material as it has severe unintended consequences that are rarely considered. In a recent analysis of the central New Mexico market indicated eliminating access to nearby quarries increased residential, commercial and public construction costs by 30-90 percent. This has an obvious impact on public works budgets and clearly diminishes affordable infrastructure development and economic development.

The passage of the Aggregate Protection Act in Arizona created a significant opportunity for counties, municipalities, and special districts to work productively with the mining industry to ensure the sustainable growth of our communities. It established a framework and new requirements for planners and community leaders to responsibly address one of the most critical elements affecting the viability of future development; the availability of affordable construction materials. These valuable construction materials are the crucial building materials for every residential, commercial, industrial, and infrastructure project.

There are also safety and environmental considerations. The further trucks must drive to transport aggregates to construction sites leads to increased congestion, traffic, and emissions. .

A handful of states have taken steps to ensure future availability of aggregate resources but there has been little federal involvement to study or address these issues. The latest example of federal engagement was a 2011 DOT analysis that claimed, “The highway industry and the public need to become more educated about the importance of aggregates to local economies and regional transportation infrastructure.”

The ROCKS Act establishes a working group of federal, state and local stakeholders to examine the use of aggregates and work to institute responsible federal policy to ensure continued access to this critical resource. Under the legislation, the working group will:

1. study the use of aggregates resources in federally funded transportation and construction projects and how the proximity of aggregates resources impacts cost, safety and the environmental impact of these projects, and
2. examine how state and local transportation and planning agencies may consider aggregates resources when developing transportation and construction projects, and
3. identify measures the federal government, state and local transportation and planning and scientific agencies may take to preserve currently identified aggregates resources for future development

ARPA lauds the efforts of Congressman Greg Stanton in taking a federal approach to what has been done in his home state of Arizona. Eric Mears of Haley & Aldrich who is an ARPA Board member and the author of the Aggregates Protection Act in Arizona commented, “Satisfying the competing interests and diverse opinions of your community makes land use planning especially challenging, and we recognize that adding a requirement to address aggregate resources does not make planning any easier. But, take a moment to consider the political and financial implications of not protecting these valuable resources. This is a critical discussion that must take place and many thanks to Congressman Stanton for taking this critical first step.”

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*ARPA is the oldest mining related trade organization in Arizona and for over 60 years has been providing representation for over 50 member companies involved with the production of aggregates, asphaltic concrete, ready mix concrete, asphalt, lime products, and portland cement used in nearly every private and public construction project in Arizona. Arizona's aggregate mining industry employs approximately 6,275 people directly and another 9,450 indirectly for a total of 15,725 and has an estimated direct and indirect impact on the Arizona economy of \$3 billion. Our over 50 producer members are combined with 66 associate members that provide related transportation, contracting, mining supplies and consulting services. These operations are a benefit to any community in terms of employment, tax revenues, charitable giving and adding to the quality of residents lives by providing the essential materials necessary for schools, homes, roads and hospitals in the area.*