

Remarks by Senator John McCain  
U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony  
December 8, 2009

“I’m honored to join Speaker Pelosi, Governor Jan Brewer, Congresswoman Kirkpatrick, and my fellow members of the Arizona Congressional delegation in celebrating the lighting of this year’s Capitol Christmas Tree.

“This occasion marks the first time that Arizona has supplied a tree to the nation’s capital since the Forest Service began the tradition in 1971. Initially, we offered a saguaro cactus, but the Architect of the Capitol, Steve Ayers, cordially declined

“The magnificent 70-year old 65-foot Blue spruce standing before us was harvested from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest near the City of Show Low, the Town of Springerville, and the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation.

“From there it traveled the State: riding by truckbed through Mogollon Rim country to the County Courthouse in Prescott, visiting the State Capitol in Phoenix on its way to historic Tucson, passing through the farm land of Yuma, and traveling alongside the mighty Colorado River to Kingman. Finally, it journeyed on old Route 66 to Flagstaff and continued eastward through the Navajo Nation on its way to Washington.

“The tree is adorned with about 6,000 ornaments handcrafted by Arizona schoolchildren. Assisting the Speaker in lighting the tree is Kaitlyn Fenerick, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student from Canyon Ridge School in Surprise, AZ. We’re also joined by ‘The President’s Own’ United States Marine Corps Band.

“This stately spruce is an example of Arizona’s diverse ecosystem, a glimpse of its picturesque scenery, and a symbol of the Christmas spirit imparted by Arizona families to the rest of the nation.”