

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr. President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
N.W. Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Urgent Request to Protect Oak Flat Native American Sacred Site

Dear President Biden,

We write with urgency on behalf of the undersigned conservation, Indigenous, religious, and business groups representing millions of members and supporters to immediately withdraw the recently issued Final Environmental Impact Statement, Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange (EIS 20210005) that will facilitate a land exchange and construction of the Resolution Copper mine, resulting in the destruction of a Native American sacred area, Oak Flat or Chi'chil Bildagoteel.

Located in the Tonto National Forest in southeastern Arizona, Oak Flat is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is of irreplaceable cultural importance for the Western Apache and other Tribes. Oak Flat is part of the ancestral homelands of not only the Apache, but also the Yavapai, Hopi, Zuni and many other Tribes in the Southwest. Nearly all of the 574 federally recognized Tribes have expressed opposition to the land transfer and support the protection of Oak Flat.

Oak Flat and the surrounding lands that are part of the exchange would be destroyed by the mine, creating a crater one-mile-wide and 1,000 feet deep. The area also has world-renowned rock-climbing sites and is popular with other recreationists. The land provides habitat for endangered species and hundreds of migratory birds.

Despite being withdrawn from mineral entry more than 60 years ago by President Eisenhower, a literal midnight rider (Section §3003) attached to the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act authorized a land exchange upon release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and federal appraisal within 60-days, by the end of which Oak Flat would be transferred into the private ownership of Resolution Copper, a limited liability corporation jointly owned by foreign mining corporations Rio Tinto and BHP. If consummated, Oak Flat would forever be lost to current and future generations of Tribal members and the public at large.

It is this prohibition on mining that the mining companies seek to evade by obtaining possession of the land directly. Trading away this land without proper review and consideration of the vast devastation that would result is a fundamental abdication of the public trust. The mine will also cause extensive dewatering and risk pollution of ground and surface waters.

Unfortunately, the FEIS has been fast tracked by the former Trump administration and includes numerous deficiencies that violate the National Environmental Policy Act and other federal laws, and as such, the FEIS should be withdrawn, allowing for more time to address these significant flaws.

This land is important to all Americans, but none more so than the Western Apache peoples, generations of whom have used it for ceremony, healing and sustenance across many centuries and continue to do so to this day.

Your administration has pledged to restore the federal government's trust responsibility with Native nations and to protect sacred sites and public lands and waters with high conservation and cultural values.

We urge you to act swiftly and withdraw the flawed FEIS for proper review and evaluation.

Sincerely,

350 Ventura County Climate Hub
7th Generation Warriors for Peace
A Community Voice
A Community Voice - Louisiana
Able Academy Alternatives for Biosphere
Alternatives
Access Fund
Albuquerque Wildlife Federation
Alchemie Academy
Alliance for Climate Education
Alliance for Global Justice
Amazon Watch
Americans for Indian Opportunity
Amethyst Luna Co-op
Anthropocene Alliance
Arizona Faith Network
Arizona Mining Reform Coalition
Arizona Yoga Co.

Arizona Youth Climate Coalition
Arizonans for a Better Environment
Ashatar, Inc.
Azul
Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict
Studies
Bird N Co.
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
Black Mesa Water Keeper
Bnai Derech Adam
Bold Alliance
Brittany E Burgard Illustration
Broad Salon
Citizens of Western Watersheds, PAC
Cavaliere Art LLC.
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Peace Research
Cenyeliztli Seeds

Citizens Committee for Flood Relief
Claiborne Avenue Alliance
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Healers
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
Coalition for Wetlands and Forests
Collaborative Ventures
Concerned Citizens Retired Miners
Coalition
Conservation Council for Hawaii
Crystal Aire Appliance Repair
Dawni Pappas Consulting
Defenders of Wildlife
Divest. Invest. Protect.
Division Autosport
Earth Day Network
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earthjustice
Earthworks
EcoFlight
Education, Economics, Environmental,
Climate and Health Organization
Elders Climate Action
Embodhi Love Productions
Embodiment Project
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Enthusiast Design
Environmental Innovations
Environmental Law Society at American
University
Environmental Protection Information
Center
Environmental Services and Technology,
LLC
Fast Color Music
Flagstaff N AZ Group - Sierra Club
Franciscan Action Network
Freshwater Future
Friends of the Santa Cruz River

Friends of the Boundary Waters
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Land of Keweenaw
Gila Resources Information Project
Global Community Communications
Alliance
Grand Junction Broadband - Great Old
Broads
Great Basin Resource Watch
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Green Long Beach!
Haida Gwaii Storm Riders
Heart of the Gila Inc.
Heartwood
High Country Conservation Advocates
Higher Ground
Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and
the Outdoors
Honoring Our New Ethnic Youth
Honor the Earth
Howling for Wolves
Hui Aloha Aina Waimea - Hawaiian
Patriotic League
Idle No More Michigan
Idle No More SF Bay
In Good Faith
Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff
Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy
Program
Information Network for Responsible
Mining
International Marine Mammal Project of
Earth Island Institute
John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute
Kapu Aloha WA Kia'i
KSK Buddhist Center
Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe
Environment
Land Alliance
LEAD Agency, Inc.

League of Conservation Voters
London Mining Network
Lost Coast League
Malach Consulting
Maricopa Audubon Society
MarinX
Massachusetts River Alliance
Mauna Kea Education and Awareness
Mc Neal Consulting
Mending Shadows
Minn. Center for Environmental Advocacy
MM Grant
Missing Murdered Indigenous Women &
People of California
Mount Graham Coalition
Movimiento Molcajete / MA Series Arts
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe
Environment
National Lawyers Guild - Indigenous
Peoples' Rights Committee
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Native American Council Diocese of AZ
Natural Allies
New England Foundation for the Arts
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New Mexico Sportsmen
New Mexico Wild
North American Council
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Northern Jaguar Project
NY4WHALES
Ocean City, Flooding Committee, Chapter
of Higher Ground
Ocean Conservation Research
Oceanic Preservation Society
Oil Change International
OverArizona, LLC
Oyu Tolgoi Watch
Paragon Specialties
Patagonia Area Resource Alliance
Paws for Reflection
People of the Wolfe
Pine Forest School
Protect Our Water
Public Employees for Environmental
Responsibility
Pueblo Action Alliance
Rachel Carson Council
Rebecca Lipton Physical Therapy
Red Handed Warrior Society
Redrum Motorcycle Club, Black Swamp
Ohio Chapter
Rio Grande Indivisible, New Mexico
Run4Salmon, Winnemem Wintu Tribe
Sage Soul Healing
Salvage Communications LLC
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Save James Island
Save Our Cabinets
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save Our Soundside
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
Save Tonto National Forest
Saving Island Green Wildlife & Beyond
Seven Circles Foundation
Shadow Nation Inc
Shalom Mennonite Fellowship
Shumpert Engineering
Sierra Club
Signal Fire
Silver Valley Community Resource Center,
Bunker Hill Superfund Site
Sky Island Alliance
Smallwheel Films
SoCal 350 Climate Action
SoCal 350
Society for American Archaeology
Soil Sponge Collective
Southeast Faith Leaders Network

Soul Proprietor
South San Juan Broadband of Great Old
Broads
St. John's Episcopal Church
Sunrise Tucson
Suppressed Histories Archives
SustainUs
Sycuan Pow-Wow
TeachBoost
The Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project
The American Alpine Club
The Andrew Lees Trust
The Forest Advocate
The Lands Council
The Rewilding Institute
The Stevens-Lloyd Group, Inc.
The Wilderness Society
The Journey Within
Thunderbird Strategic LLC
Timber Wolf Artwork
Tucson Audubon Society

Tucson Clean & Beautiful
Tucson Showing Up for Racial Justice
Tuning4Armageddon
Turtle Island Restoration Network
United Pillars of Aloha
Uranium Watch
VeteransRespond
Water Protector Alliance
Water Protector Legal Collective
Weber Sustainability Consulting
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Nebraska Resources Council
Western Watersheds Project
Whyte Tara
Wild Arizona
Wild Sonora
Wild Watershed
Wild Earth Guardians
Wind Spirit Community Inc.
X King Products

Copies to

Robert Bonnie, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Senior Advisor on Climate