



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 21, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-Elect
The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice-President Elect
Biden-Harris Transition Team
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden and Vice-President Elect Harris:

The current Administration is fast-tracking the transfer of public land located in the Tonto National Forest (Forest) in Arizona known as *Chich'il Bildagoteel*, or Oak Flat, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property, to foreign conglomerates through their shell limited liability company called Resolution Copper. These foreign corporations seek to develop one of the largest mines in North America to monetize natural resources owned by the American people for their own private enrichment. This proposed mine, as admitted by the Forest and Resolution Copper, will result in the total destruction of this sacred tribal land and the contamination and degradation of thousands of other acres of public lands. We urge your Administration to take all appropriate steps to ensure that Oak Flat remains protected as public land so that Native Americans can continue to practice their ceremonies and traditional ways of life as they have for centuries and so that all other Americans can continue to enjoy this national treasure.

A provision setting forth the mechanism for the transfer of Oak Flat to Resolution Copper was included as Section 3003 in the FY15 National Defense Authorization Act as part of a back-room, closed-door deal during the waning hours of the 113th Congress. Section 3003 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer Oak Flat to Resolution Copper no later than 60 days upon publication of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regardless of the findings of the EIS and defeating its purpose to help guide decision-makers in determining whether this proposed transfer would be in the best interest of the American people.

The Forest's draft environmental analysis confirms that Resolution Copper seeks to develop a massive mine one mile beneath the earth's surface by detonating and extracting 1.4 billion tons of rock. The Forest also admits that the surface will collapse, resulting in a crater at least 1.8 miles across and 1,000 feet in depth that will be visible from space. Beyond the mine itself, Resolution Copper plans to develop at least 30 miles of pipelines, power lines, roads, electrical substations, and other facilities on additional public lands, including a proposed 2,300 to 5,900-acre dump site to store an estimated 1.37 billion tons of mine waste. Further, the Forest's and other analyses show that large volumes of water resources in the region will be significantly depleted and contaminated, severely impacting large numbers of water users in the region for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and your efforts to protect public lands of significant religious, historical, and cultural value to the American people.

Respectfully,

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress