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April 10, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

RE: Please protect sacred Oak Flat and Native American culture from Resolution Copper

Dear President Biden,

The undersigned groups, representing millions of supporters working to protect the environment, our climate, public lands, and the rights of Tribal nations, urge you to do all in your power to protect sacred Oak Flat from being traded away and destroyed by Resolution Copper's proposed block cave mine.

We support a rapid transition to renewable energy to address the climate and nature crises. But we must not meet our green energy needs by destroying a sacred site, or irreplaceable desert riparian habitat with perennial water flows. Copper is abundant in the United States and siting new mines in places sacred to Indigenous people is a fundamentally unjust approach to meeting this country's material needs. We don't need this mine and robust alternatives exist for meeting America's copper needs, including recycling.

Oak Flat — *Chi' chil Bildagoteel* in the Apache language — is a Traditional Cultural Property listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located within the Tonto National Forest in southeastern Arizona. The Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona – representing 21 tribal nations in the state – has passed resolutions supporting the protection of Oak Flat. These tribes are joined by tribes and tribal organizations across the country, including the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI).

Since time immemorial, Oak Flat has been a gathering place for tribal ceremonies. It is a place where tribal members can come to pray, reflect, and practice their religion. If Oak Flat is given away, the oak groves, springs, wildlife, medicinal plants, and centuries-old cultural sites, as well as the religious practices of the region's Apache people, would be forever obliterated.

According to the rescinded EIS, the mine would create a crater up to two miles wide and 1,000 feet deep. It would consume more than 250 billion gallons of water in an area that is already suffering from a historic mega drought. The mine would create 1.4 billion tons of toxic mine tailings that would cover nearly 4,000 acres of nearby wildlands, threatening to contaminate groundwater and surface water forever.

Further, the destruction of Oak Flat would obliterate a sacred site while enriching foreign mining corporations. One of those corporations, Rio Tinto, recently promised, following the destruction of another ancient sacred site in Australia, that “as a business, we are committed to learning from this event to ensure the destruction of heritage sites of such exceptional archaeological and cultural significance never occurs again.” Oak Flat is a test of that promise and one that we believe your administration can help them to keep.

We respectfully ask you to do everything in your power to uphold the responsibility of the United States to honor Native American history, culture, and religion and protect Oak Flat from destruction.

Sincerely,

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The Wilderness Society
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A Community Voice
Access Fund
American University Washington College of
Law Native American Law Students
Association
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Archaeology Southwest
Arizona Faith Network
Arizona List

Arizona Sustainability Alliance
Arizona Working Families Party
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
Brophy Native American Club
Chispa Arizona
Clean Water Alliance
Dos Aguas of the Southwest
Friends of Buckingham
Great old Broads for Wilderness
High Country Conservation Advocates
Indigenous Environmental Network
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Living United for Change in Arizona
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Micah Six Eight Mission

Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Okanogan Highlands Alliance
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Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
Spaces of Opportunity
The Clinch Coalition

Uranium Watch
Wateća Challenge
West Street Recovery/Northeast Action
Collective
Western Mining Action Network- Indigenous
Caucus
Xplore Outside

Cc: Jeff Zeints, White House Chief of Staff
Jen O'Malley Dillon, White House Deputy Chief of Staff
Bruce Reed White House Deputy Chief of Staff
Natalie Quillian, White House Deputy Chief of Staff
John Podesta, White House Deputy Chief of Staff
Brenda Mallory, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
Matt Lee Ashley, Chief of Staff, Council on Environmental Quality
Dr. Homer Wilkes, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment
Andrea Delgado, Chief of Staff, Natural Resources and Environment
Tom Vilsack, United States Secretary of Agriculture
Katharine Ferguson, Chief of Staff, United States Department of Agriculture
Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Director, Office of Domestic Climate Policy
Andrew Mayock, Federal Chief Sustainability Officer, Council on Environmental Quality
Maggie Thomas, Chief of Staff, Office of Domestic Climate Policy
Sara Gonzalez-Rothi, Senior Director for Water, Council on Environmental Quality
Candace Vahlsing, Associate Director for Climate, Energy, Environment, and Science -
Philip Giudic, Special Assistant to the President for Climate Policy, Domestic Policy Council
Gretchen Goldman, Assistant Director for Environmental Science, Engineering, Policy and
Justice Science Division
John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Executive Office of the President