



Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

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June 14, 2011

Arizona Center for Law
in the Public Interest

Arizona League of
Conservation Voters
Education Fund

Arizona Native Plant Society

Bat Conservation
International

Center for Biological
Diversity

Center for Environmental
Connections

Center for Environmental
Ethics

Defenders of Wildlife

Desert Watch

Drylands Institute

Environmental and Cultural
Conservation Organization

Environmental Law Society

Friends of Cabeza Prieta

Friends of Ironwood
Forest

Friends of Tortolita

Gates Pass Area
Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Coalition of
Greater Tucson

Northwest Neighborhoods
Alliance

Oro Valley Neighborhood
Coalition

Protect Land and
Neighborhoods

Safford Peak Watershed
Education Team

Save the Scenic Santa Ritas

Sierra Club–Grand Canyon
Chapter

Sierra Club–Rincon Group

Silverbell Mountain Alliance

Sky Island Alliance

Sky Island Watch

Society of Ecological
Restoration

Sonoran Arthropod
Studies Institute

Sonoran Permaculture Guild

Southwestern Biological
Institute

Tortolita Homeowners
Association

Tucson Audubon Society

Tucson Herpetological
Society

Tucson Mountains
Association

Wildlands Network

Women for Sustainable
Technologies
Technologies

Mayor Satish Hiremath and Councilmembers
Town of Oro Valley
11000 North La Canada Dr.
Oro Valley, AZ 85737

RE: Rescission of Resolution No. (R) 07-55, withdrawing the Town's opposition to the proposed Rosemont Mine

Dear Mayor Hiremath and Town Council Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, comprised of 39 environmental and community organizations dedicated to achieving the long-term conservation of biological diversity and ecological function of the Sonoran Desert through comprehensive land-use planning.

I urge you to oppose the item on your June 15, 2011 agenda that proposes to rescind Resolution No. (R) 07-55, approved by the Town Council unanimously on April 18, 2007, and stating the Town's opposition to the proposed Rosemont Mine. This resolution clearly outlines numerous reasons why the Rosemont Mine will be detrimental to the long term health of our economy, water resources, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and recreational and scenic values.

In the four years since Resolution No. (R) 07-55 was approved, Rosemont Copper launched a substantial public relations campaign aimed at convincing the residents of southern Arizona that their proposed mine will be positive for our region. However, this proposed mine, located in the heart of the Santa Rita Mountains, and near the headwaters of important water resources and drainages in the Tucson Basin, will be using untested methods by an untested corporation. Indeed, the 2011 Annual Information Form (a required public disclosure form for all Canadian public companies) submitted by Augusta Resources Corporation on March 31, 2011 states that the company has "no history of production" and "has never recorded any revenues from mining operations" (p. 10). The form goes on to state that:

[Insurance] against risks such as environmental pollution or other hazards as a result of exploration and production is not generally available to the Company or to other companies in the mining industry on acceptable terms. The Company might also become subject to liability for pollution or other hazards which may not be insured against or which the Company may elect not to insure against because of premium costs or other reasons (p. 15).

Thus, the proposed Rosemont mine would be run by a corporation that has no experience with mining operations, and that will likely not have adequate insurance to guard against unforeseen environmental pollution and other hazards. Furthermore, Rosemont Copper is proposing to use over 5000 acres of public lands for the disposal of toxic mine waste, lands that lead to some of Pima County's most cherished and ecologically intact waterways such as Davidson Canyon and Cienega Creek. The Coalition strongly believes these realities, along

with others, warrant strong opposition to this project and we hope you will join us in continuing your opposition to the proposed Rosemont Mine.

The Town of Oro Valley has established a strong history of supporting the conservation of biologically-rich open space in our region. You have shown regional leadership in taking steps to preserve the Tortolita-Santa Catalina Mountains Critical Landscape Linkage and officially supported the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan by adopting Conservation Lands System guidelines for future annexations. While the Rosemont Mine site is located in a different part of Pima County than Oro Valley, we hope the Town Council will recognize that the health of our economy and environment are all connected and the proposed Rosemont Mine will be detrimental to both. Indeed, mining claims exist in both the Santa Catalina and Tortolita Mountains, in the backyard of Oro Valley. These claims could be acted upon in the future. Would the Town Council remain neutral about mining projects that would destroy thousands of acres of these mountain ranges and are closer to home?

Finally, Pima County and southern Arizona are already home to numerous existing copper mines, including a new mine near Safford and mines in Green Valley owned by ASARCO and Freeport-McMoRan. While we understand the need for domestic copper production, we also think that southern Arizona already hosts enough copper mines, and efforts to increase production should focus on those mines currently in operation. According to a recent Arizona Daily Star article, in the last year Freeport-McMoRan has hired 806 new employees and ASARCO has hired 137. This is more than double the amount of jobs that Rosemont states their mine will support. In contrast to the jobs the proposed Rosemont Mine would produce, we support the promotion of the Santa Rita Mountains as a recreational and scenic destination, an effort already in motion and a proven positive contributor to our local economy. In fact, studies show that the economic boost southern Arizona receives from its beautiful landscapes, clean air, and myriad recreational opportunities dwarfs that of mining.

In addition, the U.S Forest Service's Rosemont Copper Project *Deliberative Draft Environmental Impact Statement* states that the operation would significantly increase the likelihood of violations of air quality standards in the Tucson metro area and cause degradation of viewsheds such as Saguaro National Park.

Again, I urge you to oppose the item on your June 15, 2011 agenda that proposes to rescind Resolution No. (R) 07-55, approved by the Town Council unanimously on April 18, 2007, and stating the Town's opposition to the proposed Rosemont Mine.

Thank for your considering our comments on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Campbell
Executive Director