

Dear *(Name of Representative or Senator)*,

I am writing to you to ask for your support of *(H.R. 2811 for the House OR S. 2242 for the Senate)*. As a result of the 2014 privatization of the southern section of the Tonto National Forest, this land could soon be the site of the largest copper mine in North America headed by Resolution Copper.

This is an issue of preserving our national forests and public lands. As more and more of our country becomes developed for the harvest of natural resources and the expansion of our communities, it is crucial that we protect the wild areas that are still left. The people of this country never consented to giving away any national forest land. Public lands such as the Tonto National Forest are meant to be protected and kept open to all.

Oak Flat and the surrounding areas are sacred to the San Carlos Apache tribe and destroying this land would be devastating as it has been a part of their culture for generations. This area is the location of the Apache Sunrise Ceremony, a coming of age ceremony for Apache women. It also contains petroglyphs, oak trees whose acorns are used in traditional food and medicine, and is adjacent to the well-known Apache Leap. Though the mining company claims that Apache Leap will not be affected, the potential risk of damage should not be ignored. The burial grounds of Apache people are sacred and must be protected and respected.

In addition, the copper mine will affect one of our most precious resources: water. In order to keep the mine shafts dry, precious groundwater will be removed. This mine will use an estimated 20,000 acre feet of water per year- enough to provide water for 20,000 families or 80,000 people for an entire year. As a result of the mining an estimated 1.5 billion tons of contaminated tailings will be left behind. The land itself will be forever changed as a 2 mile wide and 1000 feet deep subsidence zone forms in Oak Flat, making it inaccessible to future generations.

Oak Flat is home to a variety of endangered wildlife that must be protected, from the Spotted Bat to the Arizona Hedgehog Cactus. Oak Flat is also a popular tourist destination for people from all over the world, from climbers to birders.

*[Please use this space to write why this issue matters to you—as a parent, environmentalist, outdoorsperson, climber, etc. This can be just a few sentences.]*

Please take a stand in preserving our country's public spaces and protecting the Apache peoples' right to religious freedom by co-sponsoring and supporting *(H.R. 2811 for the House OR S. 2242 for the Senate)*, the "Save Oak Flat Act."

Sincerely,

*(Name)*

*(Address)*