

February 24, 2007

Congressional Oversight Hearing

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

"Our National Forests at Risk: The 1872 Mining Law and its impact on the Santa Rita Mountains of Arizona."

Testimony of Lainie Levick
President, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas

Thank you Congressman Grijalva, Congressman Costa and members of the committee for convening this hearing on the Rosemont Mine, the 1872 Mining Law and the impacts on the Santa Rita Mountains. I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Lainie Levick. I am here today representing Save the Scenic Santa Ritas (SSSR). We are an all volunteer, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1996 to protect the scenic, recreational, environmental and wildlife values of the Santa Rita Mountains, including protection from degradation due to mining activities. We are intensely opposed to all proposals for mining in the Santa Rita Mountains. We are opposed to plans by Augusta Resource, a Canadian company, to use our public lands as a dump for their toxic mining wastes at Rosemont Ranch.

We are in strong support of the efforts to withdraw this area from mineral entry. We are aware that withdrawal is subject to valid existing rights, meaning that valid mining claims remain in effect. The Forest Service has refused to conduct a validity exam of the claims at Rosemont, although they have the jurisdiction to do so. We hope this withdrawal will force an examination, and reduce the needless destruction of the area by further mineral exploration and development.

I am the current President of SSSR. We have 11 members on our Board of Directors, and 8 members on our Advisory Committee. We have no paid memberships, but maintain an email action alert list which includes members from other organizations that forward the alerts on to their lists. These citizens are all passionate about protecting the Santa Ritas. They include off-road vehicle groups; hiking, birding and mountain biking groups; neighborhood and conservation groups; and many others. Our current activities include maintaining a website (www.ScenicSantaRitas.org), working with local public officials, public outreach and education, hikes to the Rosemont area, and contact with the local press. In addition, we have an online petition opposing the mine that has approximately 919 signatures since Oct. 29, 2006 when it went online (<http://www.petitiononline.com/sssr2006/petition.html>). A copy of that petition is attached. We also have over 80 names on paper petitions. No one has been paid to collect signatures or sign the petition, nor is anyone expecting to receive compensation

or get a job by signing. It is all completely voluntary, and shows the strong public opposition to this mine proposal.

History of SSSR and our efforts to protect the Santa Ritas

The Santa Ritas and the Rosemont Valley have been of interest to mining companies for over a century. I will not discuss that history here (see our website for more information www.ScenicSantaRitas.org), but will just present the most recent attempts at mining that prompted the formation of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas.

In 1995, the Rosemont Ranch was proposed for copper mining by ASARCO, Inc. ASARCO had acquired through purchase and patenting under the 1872 Mining Law, nearly 3,000 acres in the Coronado National Forest's Santa Rita Mountains, which included the porphyry copper ore body. In 1995 they sought to acquire an additional 13,272 acres (more than 20 square miles) of claimed National Forest land through a land exchange, to provide additional areas for disposal of overburden and mine tailings, and to provide a land-use buffer for the mine.

In 1996, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Association formed as a non-profit organization to stop the land exchange and open pit mine proposal. Over a hundred people were actively involved in that effort, and almost 3,000 people signed petitions opposing the land exchange and mine. These petitions were presented to the Forest Service in 1997. SSSR was endorsed by 55 local groups (see list attached) ranging from hunting, off-road vehicle and gun clubs, to neighborhood associations, hikers and birders. A campaign coordinator was hired to help with the political, administrative, fundraising, and media work.

SSSR also gained the support of the local governments in Southern Arizona. In May of 1997, the Pima County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to oppose the proposed Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange and passed a resolution in opposition (attached). Congressman Grijalva, who was at the time Chair of the Board of Supervisors, signed this resolution. It stated, "The public interest of Pima County and southern Arizona will . . . not be furthered by the proposed Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange." The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, Pima County Parks and Recreation Department, the Arizona Audubon Council and the Tucson City Council also passed resolutions against the land exchange that year. A copy of the Pima County resolution is attached. The other resolutions are similar in content.

All three major local governmental bodies gave similar reasons for opposing the land exchange: the loss of access to 20 square miles of public land, and the resulting stresses on remaining public land in the area; the loss of recreational opportunities for residents of, and visitors to, southern Arizona; the potential negative impacts on our tourism-based economy; the potential harm to wildlife as management of this diverse habitat passed from the Forest Service to a private corporation; the negative impact on the overall quality of life in southern Arizona; and several other reasons.

In early 1998, Coronado National Forest Supervisor John McGee announced to the press that "he and ASARCO have mutually agreed to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding related to potential copper mine development or land exchange in the Santa Rita Mountains."

Although the immediate threat of a land exchange and copper mine was halted, there remained over 13,000 acres of unpatented mineral claims in the National Forest, as well as the unresolved situation with the private lands at Rosemont Ranch.

In 2004, the Ranch was sold by ASARCO to a new owner who was considering conservation instead of mining, and was willing to sell all or a portion of the Ranch to Pima County. The County was very interested in purchasing this property since it is almost entirely within the designated biological core area of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP), and the Santa Ritas are a priority conservation area with important wildlife habitat. The SDCP is the result of years of scientific study that will help guide development and ecosystem protection in Pima County (<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/intro.html>).

In late 2004, Pima County prepared a report to evaluate the potential benefits of acquiring Rosemont Ranch and associated water and mineral rights for open space preservation. The only available funding for this purchase was from the 2004 Open Space Bond funds; however, most of the Rosemont Ranch was not included in the list of properties to be acquired with these funds because all inholdings in the National Forest were categorically excluded from the 2004 land acquisition priorities. The groups working on this list assumed that Land and Water Conservation Funds would be available to acquire Forest Service inholdings.

As a result, Pima County was not able to purchase Rosemont Ranch with 2004 Bond money, and in 2005 the owner instead sold the property to Augusta Resource Corporation, a Canadian company. Augusta has proceeded with exploration activities and in 2006 submitted a mining plan to the Forest Service. This plan was rejected due to lack of detail. Although Augusta's mining footprint would be similar in size to ASARCO's land exchange proposal, unlike ASARCO, Augusta is not offering to acquire and protect other land in advance of mining to compensate for the irreversible losses of land that would occur. Instead, Augusta is offering a "regional trust" for a variety of projects, which may or may not include land acquisition, but the land acquisition, if any, would occur after the mining impacts.

In 2006 Save the Scenic Santa Ritas succeeded in getting the private lands at Rosemont Ranch on the preliminary list of properties to be purchased for Community Open Space through Pima County's upcoming 2008 Open Space Bond. If the property becomes available for sale, Pima County will be better able to protect these lands through bond funds. SSSR continues to monitor the activities of Augusta at Rosemont Ranch, educate and inform the public, and participate in any public participation opportunities that arise.

The importance of the Rosemont Valley to the citizens of Southern Arizona and the potential impacts from mining.

The Rosemont Valley is important to our quality of life in Southern Arizona, for recreation, scenic views, water resources, wildlife habitat and ecosystem processes. As our population grows, and development spreads out from the urban areas, there will be more pressure on Rosemont for its numerous values. Augusta claims they will maintain multiple uses at Rosemont Ranch, but it is unlikely that these uses would continue after it becomes an open pit

copper mine. Intensive development of the area as a mine would result in the permanent loss of these resources.

The potential impacts to the Rosemont Valley from an open pit copper mine are simply not acceptable to the citizens of Southern Arizona. These impacts would include destruction of the landscape (vegetation, soil and hydrologic processes), water and air quality degradation, noise and light pollution, destruction of scenic views from State Scenic Highway 83, increased traffic hazards, lower property values, huge loss of recreation lands, destruction of wildlife habitat, and damage to the local tourism-based economy.

Degradation of Water Resources

Most mines cause some damage to surface and ground water resources. Even though they may use modern technology or have good intentions, mines have unintended leaks and spills. In the arid southwest, we have lost over 80% of our riparian areas, making it even more important that we protect what's left. Our water resources are already severely stressed due to a growing population and existing groundwater contamination from past industrial and mining uses.

There are many potential water resource impacts from a mine at Rosemont. The mine site is in a particularly sensitive and important location. It is in the watershed of Cienega Creek, a state protected Outstanding Water (also called a Unique Water, a water quality anti-degradation protection), and part of the watershed for Tucson's water supply.

Augusta has proposed to dump their mine wastes (tailings and waste rock) into Barrel Canyon, one of the main drainages to Davidson Canyon which flows into Cienega Creek. They have also proposed several holding ponds that would impound surface flows in Barrel Canyon. Filling this canyon and impounding the surface water will deplete flows in both Davidson and Cienega Creek and cause significant damage to the riparian habitats. Any leaks or spills from the mine site would flow into and contaminate these rare riparian systems. Augusta's mining plan used the 100-year 24-hour design storm for their stormwater management plan; however the flood events during the summer of 2006 in Southern Arizona were determined to be 10,000 year events.

Although Augusta claims they will use "dry" tailings, water will still be required for processing. When water is applied onto broken rock in areas with high sulfate concentrations, sulfuric acid is generated which in turn leaches out heavy metals. These potentially toxic heavy metals and other chemicals could leach into ground and surface waters and Tucson's water supplies.

An article in the Arizona Daily Star article on Wednesday Feb. 21, 2007, reported that "The EPA is investigating the mines west of Green Valley after monitoring wells on the Sierrita mine site found uranium in the groundwater at twice the legal limit. Mary Poulton, head of the department of mining and geological engineering at the University of Arizona, said uranium and thorium often occur in the same granite rocks that contain copper and molybdenum." According to Bev Everson, geologist with the Coronado National Forest, the

deposit at Rosemont is the same type of deposit as Sierrita. This creates concerns that the same type of water quality contamination may occur at Rosemont if the mine is permitted.

Augusta hasn't yet disclosed their water source, but it will likely be groundwater from the Santa Cruz Basin, at about 5,000 – 8,000 acre feet per year, or enough water for a city the size of Santa Fe. Domestic wells in the area of Rosemont Ranch already go dry periodically due to overuse of the aquifer and cannot handle additional stress. Stream flow and springs would likely dry up from this quantity of groundwater withdrawal, adversely affecting plants and wildlife. Most of the groundwater extraction would probably occur from dewatering the pit, and this pumping would lower the groundwater level, change the recharge patterns and change the groundwater flow direction. This has the potential to diminish underground flows moving southeast to the upper Cienega Basin, including Empire Gulch, as well as flows moving north toward Davidson Canyon. Until a complete water balance and hydrologic study of the area are completed, it is unknown exactly how much water would be required for processing, and what the surface and ground water impacts would be.

A recent report by Anne Maest and Jim Kuipers looked at how well the NEPA process predicted water quality impacts from mines. They found that 73% of the mines that predicted no adverse impacts to surface water resources actually did cause water quality standard exceedances. They also found that 92% of the mines close to surface or ground water had surface water impacts, and 77% caused ground water contamination when they had predicted no impacts. The possibility of water quality and groundwater degradation is extremely high if the Rosemont mine is permitted. These are risks we can no longer afford to take in Southern Arizona where our water resources are already severely stressed. This is reason enough to deny the mine. But under the 1872 Mining Law, these concerns cannot be considered, leaving mineral withdrawal as the best available option to stop this project.

Reclamation

Although Augusta claims they will use environmentally responsible techniques and restore the area to ranching and wildlife uses, there are no legal requirements that they do so. The 1872 Mining Law does not require reclamation, and the Arizona Mined Land Reclamation Act is extremely weak. This proposed mine would permanently destroy approximately 4,000 acres (over 3,000 acres of public land). Augusta will be required to post a bond for site reclamation, but it is unknown if it will be adequate for real restoration of the site. Most reclamation bonds mainly cover the cost of surface reclamation, and barely address water quality issues, which can be difficult to predict. By far the greatest expense in current mined land reclamation is for long-term water quality monitoring and treatment (i.e. for at least 100 years), since ground water contamination can take years to appear, and leaching may continue into perpetuity. Furthermore, in this semi-arid climate, where rainfall is highly unpredictable, revegetating over 4,000 acres to ranching and wildlife uses would require intensive irrigation and long-term monitoring. Reclamation costs for similar sized mines have been estimated at \$200 to \$300 million, with most of the cost for water quality restoration. Augusta has not indicated how much they will put up for their reclamation bond. Open pit mining causes irreversible changes to the landscape, and in our semi-arid climate restoration to any form of sustainable use would be a formidable task.

Air Pollution

The region currently has excellent air quality. Mine tailings and waste piles would be sources of dust, which prevailing winds would blow toward the Tucson basin. Air quality in the National Forest and surrounding residential areas would be degraded by both dust and truck exhaust (which contains diesel fumes and particulate smoke). Augusta's proposed "dry" tailings and other mine waste could allow dust particles to become airborne, creating a plume of metal particles in the air. Wind speeds throughout the Sonoita Valley tend to be high. Dust plumes originating from mine sites are serious concerns since they can move great distances (further than water pollution) and contain heavy metals. For example, tungsten originating from the mine tailings in Bisbee is suspected as the cause of the leukemia cluster in Sierra Vista, about 25 miles away. If gold is present, then airborne plumes of particulate arsenic may occur since there is a strong correlation between the presence of gold and arsenic. Predicting wind direction and velocity requires extensive monitoring and the analysis of wind rose diagrams.

Impacts to Biological Values and Wildlife

Rosemont Valley is biologically important from its pinion pine-oak grasslands in the higher elevations to the cactus shrub grasslands in the lower portions. The Valley is part of the Madrean Archipelago bio-region of North America. Named as one of four Biodiversity Hotspots in North and Central America in 2004, the Santa Rita Mountains and Rosemont Ranch contain a level of biodiversity that is unmatched in most other parts of the United States. The Santa Ritas have also been designated as an "Important Birding Area". From a landscape-level perspective, the northern Santa Ritas, where Rosemont is located, act as a critical landscape connection to the Empire and Rincon Mountains to the north and east. This connection is best characterized by the fact that several jaguars - one of many federally listed species within the area - occurred in the vicinity in the 1900's.

There are two Endangered Species known to exist at Rosemont: Lesser Long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae*) and Pima Pineapple Cactus (*Coryphantha scheeri robustispina*). In addition, this area may be home to the Chiricahua Leopard Frog (*Rana chiricahuensis*), listed as threatened, and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), a candidate for listing.

There are six others priority vulnerable species or Wildlife of Special Concern known to occur in the Rosemont Ranch area, according to the AZ Game and Fish Department: Mexican Long-tongued Bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*), Western Red Bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), Lowland Leopard Frog (*Rana yavapaiensis*), Giant Spotted Whiptail Lizard (*Cnemidophorus burti stictogrammus*), Rufous-winged Sparrow (*Aimophila carpalis*), and Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*). The Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) may also occur there, based on its habitat requirements.

For more information on wildlife potentially affected, see the report by Pima County, “Preserving the Santa Rita Rosemont Ranch” (2004).

<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/reports/d29/Rosemont%20Ranch.pdf>

Loss of Recreational Opportunities

The Rosemont Valley is a valuable recreational resource for Southern Arizona. This area is used for hiking, camping, off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, dirt bikes, hunting, bird-watching, bicycling, picnicking, photography and sight-seeing. As the population in this region grows, and development spreads further out from the urban areas, there will be more and more demand on this area. A mine at Rosemont would result in the permanent loss of these recreation lands, and will aggravate our increasingly crowded public lands, decreasing the quality of recreational experiences.

Noise Pollution

Daily blasting is required to remove rock covering the ore body. The impact to nearby residences, wildlife and recreational users in the National Forest will be equivalent to daily sonic booms. The blasting may also cause damage to nearby residences. The noise from large mining trucks at the site and on the local roads would be disruptive to people and wildlife in the area.

Light Pollution

Mines operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They require huge amounts of lighting which would interfere with the operation of local observatories, such as Mt. Hopkins, and would not be in compliance with Pima County’s Dark Sky Ordinance. Many people live in the Sonoita and Empire Valleys because they value the rural lifestyle, which includes dark skies and stars at night. The lights from a mine would impact this aspect of their lives.

Loss of Scenic Views

The mine site is visible from State Highway 83, a designated State Scenic Highway. The scenic views will be impacted for about 3 miles of the 24-mile drive from I-10 to Sonoita. This 3-mile segment includes the portion of the highway where it gains its greatest elevation above the surrounding land, at which point drivers are treated to a sweeping panoramic view of the Rosemont Valley to the west. The mine site dominates this view which currently consists of spectacular rolling hills of grasslands, dotted with oak trees and backed by a scenic, rugged ridge line.

Traffic Hazards

Mine related traffic and trucks, including ore trucks and vehicles carrying heavy construction equipment and explosives for blasting, will use the Rosemont Junction Road and narrow, winding Highway 83 which is heavily used by commuters, school buses, tourists, motorcycles

and bicyclists. This would create very dangerous and hazardous driving conditions, and the heavy mine trucks would damage the road more quickly than normal traffic.

Decrease in Property Values

The areas surrounding the mine site have developed into rural residential areas, ranches and ranchettes. The development of an open pit mine will lower property values in those areas due to increased air pollution, noise and light pollution, water quality impacts, and a generally reduced quality of life. The Sonoita Valley, a weekend tourist destination, may experience reduced tourism and could be thrown into the boom-bust economy typical of western towns adjacent to large mining operations.

Economic Impacts

Any economic benefits of the mine will be offset by the negative impacts on tourism-related businesses dependent on the area's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. Mine employment may be partially or completely offset by (1) the impact of the mine on recreational and scenic values which might otherwise have lured companies into relocating to Southern Arizona; and (2) the long-term deleterious effects of mining's well known boom-bust economies. Although Augusta is promising to provide about 350 jobs, these jobs will last only about 20 years (boom-bust economy of mining), and there is no guarantee they will come from the community. Typically, mining companies fill management positions from out of town, and other skilled mining jobs are typically filled by people moving from other mining areas.

Mining no longer represents a large portion of the jobs or income in Arizona. Besides farming, mining has consistently represented a very small portion of personal income in Arizona since 1970. According to the Arizona Game & Fish website, in 2000, mining provided about 2,500 jobs in Pima and Santa Cruz counties. In comparison, recreation related jobs totaled 8,541 in 2001, or more than 3 times the number of jobs as mining provided. This includes jobs related to non-consumptive recreation such as camping, hiking and bird watching (approximately 3,430 jobs), hunting and fishing (about 1,400 jobs), and OHV related jobs (about 3,700).

The Arizona Watchable Wildlife program is a program run by the Arizona department of tourism and partnered with Arizona Game & Fish. Watchable wildlife recreation includes bird watching and general wildlife viewing at our parks and other attractions like the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, or local Bed and Breakfasts that focus on nature activities. Statistics show that retail sales related to this program totaled over \$173 million in 2001 for Pima County, and \$11.9 million for Santa Cruz County. There were 3,196 jobs from these industries in Pima County, totaling \$90.7 million in salaries and wages, and 236 jobs in Santa Cruz County with \$6.2 million in salaries and wages.

When comparing the economic contributions of the main industries in Arizona for 2004, mining represented a small portion compared to aerospace, micro-electronics, and the food and travel industries. For example, the travel industry represents \$4.3 billion in Arizona, or

nearly 7 times the mining sector contribution of \$0.7 billion. Recreation related jobs produced nearly \$210 million dollars in personal income in 2001, compared to a projected \$147 million from mining jobs.

These are sustainable, non-consumptive jobs that improve our quality of life in Southern Arizona and do not harm the environment. Southern Arizona is moving towards clean, sustainable businesses, and is not as dependent on extractive industries as in the past. The small economic benefits from mining are not worth the great environmental risks. The current uses of Rosemont Valley provide more benefits to Southern Arizona than would be obtained from a copper mine.

Conclusions

The Rosemont mine proposal is a perfect example of why the 1872 Mining Law needs to be changed and updated. It is a grave injustice to the American people that in spite of overwhelming public opposition and a multitude of unacceptable environmental impacts, the Mining Law makes it nearly impossible to deny this project. In addition, the Mining Law contains no provisions for environmental protection or for reclamation and clean-up of the site once mining is finished. Although other laws are intended to protect the environment, the Mining Law takes precedence and most of the environmental destruction associated with mining is allowed. I am extremely pleased that the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, and the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources are listening to how we might address this problem.

The goal of SSSR is to prevent any mining from occurring in the Santa Ritas and the Rosemont Valley so the area can be preserved for its current uses. We support permanent protection for the Santa Ritas through withdrawal of the Forest Service lands from mineral entry. We believe that the small economic benefits of mining at Rosemont are not worth the large risks to our water, recreation and environmental resources. Arizona already has an abundance of operational copper mines that will help sustain our standard of living. The small amount of copper that may be produced at Rosemont is not significant enough to justify destroying this beautiful and important part of the Santa Rita Mountains.

We are in strong support of efforts to withdraw this area from mineral entry in the hope that the resulting claim validity exams will prove the claims at Rosemont to be invalid, and end the threat of mining there forever. Mining is not an appropriate use of this land. To quote one of the speakers at the Jan. 16, 2007 Pima County Board of Supervisors hearing on the resolution opposing mining at Rosemont Ranch: It is the wrong project in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and submit comments on this issue of great importance to the people and environment of Southern Arizona.

Respectfully submitted by
Lainie Levick
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas

Attachments

1. Current online and paper petition opposing mining at Rosemont Ranch, by Save the Scenic Santa Ritas, at <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/sssr2006/petition.html>.
2. List of Groups who endorsed the position of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas and helped stop the Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange and Open Pit Copper Mine proposal in 1997.
3. Resolution passed in 1997 by the Pima County Board of Supervisors in opposition to the Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange, signed by Supervisor Raul Grijalva.

2006-2007 ONLINE AND PAPER PETITION

To: U.S. Forest Service

PETITION IN OPPOSITION TO MINING IN THE ROSEMONT VALLEY, SANTA RITA MOUNTAINS, ARIZONA

WHEREAS, the private property known as Rosemont Ranch in the Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona, is currently being considered for a copper mine; and

WHEREAS, this private property is located within and adjacent to the Coronado National Forest, and is in Pima County; and

WHEREAS, Pima County is working to preserve critical habitat and other areas of biological significance through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, this property is located largely within the biological core management area of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, and within a watershed that drains to the proposed Santa Rita Mountain Park and the Davidson Canyon Nature Preserve, both designations proposed in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the lands being considered for mining are prime wildlife habitat, home to abundant game and non-game species such as deer, javelina, bats, mountain lion, quail, hawks, vultures, golden eagles, and songbirds; and

WHEREAS, threatened and endangered species, such as the Lesser Long-nosed Bat, and the Pima Pineapple Cactus, and other priority vulnerable species such as the Rufous-winged Sparrow, Bell's Vireo and Lowland Leopard Frogs are known to inhabit this area; and

WHEREAS, this area is an important wildlife corridor and also has high open space values; and

WHEREAS, this area of the Santa Rita Mountains is used extensively by citizens of Pima County for recreation, including hiking, bird watching, bicycling, horseback riding, hunting and off-road vehicle use, among other activities; and

WHEREAS, the area being considered for mining is a core part of the viewscape along Scenic Highway SR 83 and would permanently disfigure the viewscape; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan is to preserve the quality of life we enjoy in Pima County today for future generations; and

WHEREAS, a mine is not compatible with natural values and habitat; and

WHEREAS, copper mining elsewhere has historically been associated with air and water pollution (both surface and sub-surface); and

WHEREAS, mining on these lands will preclude future uses of these lands for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the economic benefit of mining in this area does not outweigh the local citizen's concern of the negative impacts to the adjacent Forest Service lands for a broad range of recreational activities and ecosystem health; and

WHEREAS, the public interest of Pima County and southern Arizona will thus, in sum, not be furthered by mining activities in this area.

NOW, THEREFORE, we the undersigned do hereby

1. Strongly oppose any mining activities in the Rosemont Ranch area of the Santa Rita Mountains.
2. Urge the U.S. Forest Service to reject any Mining Plan of Operations submitted by Augusta Resource Corporation for mining in the Santa Ritas based on the issues described above.
3. Urge the U.S. Forest Service to withdraw these lands from Mineral Entry to ensure their permanent protection from mining.

Sincerely,

[The Undersigned](#)

<http://www.PetitionOnline.com/sssr2006/petition.html>

List of Groups who endorsed the position of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas and helped stop the Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange and Open Pit Copper Mine proposal in 1997.

Arizona Antelope Foundation	Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Arizona Audubon Council	Sierra Club
Arizona League of Conservation Voters	Sky Island Alliance
AZ EF!	Sky Island Watch
AZ Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)	Sonoita Crossroads Forum
Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Assoc.	Sonoran Arthropod Studies Institute
Awareness to Access, Inc.	Sonoran Institute
Buffers	Southern Arizona Grasslands Trust
County Line Riders of Catalina	Southern Arizona Hang Gliding Association
Defenders of Wildlife	Southern Arizona Hiking Club
Drylands Institute	Southern Arizona Mountain Bike Assoc.
Friends of Scenic Highway 82	Southern Arizona Wildlife Callers
Game Rangers Association	Southwest Center for Biological Diversity
Green Valley Recreation Hiking Club	Student Environmental Action Coalition
Guardians for the Rural Environment	Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association
LUNA	Tucson Arts Brigade
Maricopa Audubon Society	Tucson Audubon Society
Neighborhood Coalition of Greater Tucson	Tucson City Council
Oro Valley Neighborhood Coalition	Tucson Mountains Association
Patagonia Community Association	Tucson Orienteering Club
Pima County Board of Supervisors	Tucson Rod & Gun Club
Pima County Green Party	Tucson Saddle Club
Pima County Parks & Recreation Comm.	Voices for Animals
Pima Trails Association	Western Gamebird Alliance
Preserve Arizona's Wolves (PAWS)	Western Land Exchange Project
Quail Unlimited	Wildlands Project
Rincon Institute	Wildlife Damage Review
Saguaro Forest Associates	

RESOLUTION NO. 1997- 93

RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED ROSEMONT RANCH LAND EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE AND ASARCO, INC., MINING COMPANY.

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service and ASARCO, Inc., are proposing to enter into an exchange of land known as the Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange ("the Exchange"); and

WHEREAS, the proposed exchange will transfer one parcel of 13, 727 acres of National Forest land to ASARCO for 23 noncontiguous, private parcels totaling 2,222 acres scattered elsewhere in the State of Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the land proposed for exchange and use by ASARCO is located in Pima County, approximately 30 miles south of Tucson in the northeaster Santa Rita Mountains; and

WHEREAS, the public land proposed to be transferred to ASARCO is used extensively for recreation, including hiking, bird watching, bicycling, horseback riding, hunting, and off-road vehicle use, among other activities; and

WHEREAS, ASARCO intends to use the exchanged land for operations associated with a possible open pit copper mine, including mining waste disposal, sometime in the future; and

WHEREAS, the 13,727 acres of National Forest will be immediately removed from public ownership and right of access upon approval of the exchange; and

WHEREAS, the land proposed for exchange in prime wildlife habitat, home to abundant game and non-game species such as deer, javelina, mountain lion, quail, hawks, vultures, and songbirds; and

WHEREAS, sensitive, threatened and endangered species, such as the lesser long-nosed bat, the Pima pineapple cactus, the desert tortoise, the northern gray hawk, and the leopard from are known to inhabit the are of the proposed exchange; and

WHEREAS, open-pit copper mining is not compatible with the natural wilderness and habitat; and

WHEREAS, the economy and quality of life of the citizens of Pima County and southern Arizona are heavily dependent upon recreation and tourism and hence on abundant nearby public land; and

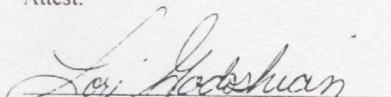
WHEREAS, the public interest of Pima County and southern Arizona will thus, in sum, not be furthered by the proposed Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange.

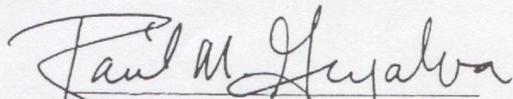
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Pima County Board of Supervisors, as follows:

- Section 1. That the Pima County Board of Supervisors is hereby opposed to the proposed Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange between the United States Forest Service and ASARCO, Inc.
- Section 2. That the Pima County Board of Supervisors hereby recommends to ASARCO, Inc., to withdraw their proposal for the Rosemont Ranch Land Exchange with the United States Forest Service.
- Section 3. That the Pima County Board of Supervisors hereby requests to be recognized and kept informed as an affected party in the Environmental Impact Statement process.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED by the Pima County Board of Supervisors this 30th day of May, 1997.

Attest:


Lori Godoshian, Clerk


Paul M. Grijalva, Chairman
Pima County Board of Supervisors
MAY 30 1997

Approved as to form:


County Attorney