

March 31, 2021

The Honorable Senator Mark Kelly
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Suite B40B
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Request to Withhold/Abstain Support – Senate Bill 915

Dear Senator Kelly:

As the President of the Arizona State Building and Construction Trades Council (AZBTC), I represent thousands of professional craftspeople who are members of our 15 building trade-affiliated unions. I write to you today to respectfully request that you make Arizona’s workers and their families a priority and withhold support for Senate Bill 915, reintroduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders on March 23, 2021, and not co-sponsor this detrimental bill.

Senate Bill 915 repeals section 3003 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, effectively reversing the land exchange agreement between the federal government and Resolution Copper Mining, LLC. This would shut down the proposed Resolution Copper Mine project near Superior, denying thousands of Arizonans high-paying, quality jobs and suppressing millions of dollars in much-needed economic investment in our region’s economy.

Passage of SB 915 would be a huge step backwards in our country’s efforts to implement progressive energy policies and mitigate the impact of climate change. Arizona workers support the Biden Administration’s Build Back Better initiatives and the “Buy Clean, Buy American” sentiment that goes with it. Copper mining and production are essential to manufacturing of electronics and medical equipment, as well as the implementation of green technologies and proposed clean energy projects. Our country’s future depends on copper, and Arizona, with its rich copper deposits, is poised to play its role to create a cleaner future for our children and grandchildren. Arizona’s union workers are trained and ready to be part of these green solutions.

Arizona’s workers deserve quality jobs that provide livable wages and benefits, and SB 915 would take jobs away from the hardworking union members of our state. AZBTC and Resolution Copper Mines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that ensures that union labor will be used during the construction, operation and shut-down phases of the mine over the next 50 years. A properly trained and experienced workforce is critical to economic growth, and by partnering with AZBTC, Resolution Copper Mining is demonstrating its commitment to generations of Arizona’s highly skilled workers. The mine will create more quality jobs for residents of the Copper Triangle, including those with tribal affiliations and armed services veterans. Resolution Copper Mine will employ nearly 5,000 tradespersons during its 10-year construction and ramp-up phases. Once completed, the mine will employ 1,500 during its



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projected 40 years of operation, paying an estimated \$134 million in wages and benefits each year. Many of these jobs will be staffed by union members who have highly specialized training and experience that prioritizes safety, efficiency and quality craftsmanship.

Senate Bill 915 ignores the will of workers whose skills and expertise will be vital to the construction and operation of the mine. Resolution Copper Mining has actively engaged the public in every step of this seven-year planning and permitting process, which started under the Obama administration and garnered bipartisan support including that of late Senator John McCain. Because of public input, this project includes protections for tribal sacred sites and sensitive ecosystems to ensure that the land and its history are preserved for generations to revere and enjoy. The building trades community, which includes members who live in Southeastern Arizona and have tribal affiliations, have added their voices in support of this project because they know that it will provide opportunities for generations of workers, and enable them to stay close to their families and communities. The mine will create an additional 2,200 indirect and induced jobs in the surrounding communities, which will benefit the workers' families and tribes in the area. These investments will revitalize small towns, boost the tax base to support schools and infrastructure, and grow the local economy to lift up the middle class.

On behalf of Arizona's workers and their families, I ask that you not support SB 915, a short-sighted bill that will do long-term harm to Arizona's skilled workforce and economy.

Sincerely,



Aaron Butler
President, Arizona Building & Construction Trades Council
Business Manager, UA Local 469 Plumbers & Pipefitters

