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## **Written Testimony of the Women's Mining Coalition to the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, April 13, 2021**

The Women's Mining Coalition (WMC) wants to thank Chairwoman Leger Fernandez, Ranking Member Don Young, full committee Chairman Grijalva and all of the distinguished committee members for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Since 1993, WMC has advocated for today's modern domestic mining industry, which is essential to our Nation. Our mission is even more important as the nation looks to rebuild our economy and lead the world toward a clean energy future. WMC's members represent many diverse sectors including metals, coal, iron ore, construction materials and industrial minerals companies; manufacturers and suppliers; trade associations; and consultants.

We believe HR 1884, otherwise known as the "Save Oak Flat Act," would cause irreparable harm to the economy of Arizona's Copper Corridor, erode trust in the federal permitting process and set a dangerous precedent that puts other critical mining projects in jeopardy. For these reasons, we urge you to reject this legislation.

The broader context of this debate is important.

The American public is finally starting to understand a truth long known to those in our industry: Our Nation cannot achieve its clean energy goals without copper. It is a key component in manufacturing wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles, storage batteries, and even the transmission lines that connect clean energy sources to the grid. Many of the critical minerals that are byproducts of copper are similarly important to manufacturing the advanced technologies that will power our economy for generations to come. Recognizing the importance of copper to a clean energy future as well as its antimicrobial properties, WMC researched and produced the attached Copper Fact Sheet which we submit for the record along with this testimony.

Globally, we are already experiencing a copper crunch. And it is expected to get worse as demand for clean energy grows. By 2050, the World Bank expects global copper demand to rise by 200%. In the U.S., there are only two active smelters capable of producing copper today -- one in Utah and one in Arizona, plus one idled smelter in Arizona. And China and other countries are working overtime to bolster their supply, while this Congress considers policies like H.R. 1884 that would strangle our Nation's ability to compete.

Once fully operational, the Resolution Copper mine near Superior, Arizona has the potential to supply up to one-quarter of the nation's copper demand. That's absolutely vital to our ability to compete in the global clean energy economy.

Of course, the project will also create thousands of good-paying jobs for residents of the Copper Triangle -- jobs that are desperately needed to spur economic recovery and growth in the region. Resolution Copper will employ 1,500 full-time workers over the 60-year life of the mine, paying an estimated \$134 million in wages and benefits each year. The mine also will spur the creation of 2,200 additional indirect jobs. And it has won strong support from local labor leaders, who see this as an enormous opportunity for union members and their families.



All told, Resolution Copper is expected to contribute up to \$61 billion in economic value for Arizona over the project's lifetime. It will boost state and local tax revenues by between \$88 million and \$113 million each year of operations, while the federal government could see an extra \$200 million in tax revenues per year.

These are real benefits to a community that desperately needs economic investment and opportunity.

That is part of the reason why so many local leaders have been strong advocates for the project. Another is because these same leaders – along with tribal leaders and many other community stakeholders -- have been a critical part of the extensive, years-long federal review and permitting process.

It should be noted that the Resolution Copper project is the only Congressionally-mandated land exchange requiring a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prior to exchange of title. For nearly a decade, the Tonto National Forest, several local communities in the Copper Triangle, stakeholders from three rural counties, nearly a dozen Native American Tribes, and multiple federal and state agencies have all worked together with Resolution Copper during the comprehensive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process.

As a result of these efforts, a number of significant changes were made to the project design and Resolution Copper committed to important mitigations to address environmental, socioeconomic and cultural concerns associated with the land exchange. These would enable the Town of Superior to grow and develop with additional land. They would expand recreation and help diversify and grow the local Copper Triangle economy. And notably, they would also ensure ongoing support for the first-of-its-kind tribal monitor program, which was created with consulting Native American Tribes, employing dozens of tribal members to ensure a transparent assessment and proper cataloging of sacred and culturally significant sites and artifacts on the property surrounding the mine.

To many in the mining community, the Resolution Copper project represents the model for what a sustainable, modern American mine can be. The permitting process, while long and arduous, was thorough and completely transparent to all stakeholders who willingly engaged in good faith. It was a process borne out of compromise to garner bipartisan support. And we know many of us believe that is something we could all use more of these days, especially in Congress.

To throw all of this hard work and progress away right now would cause irreparable harm, not only to the local community at the center of this project but to the future of mining across our great nation.

We note with great concern the addition of Section 4(b) which would go beyond the repeal of the congressionally mandated land exchange and withdraw from mineral entry the entire land exchange area consisting of 2,422 acres. This would more than triple the amount of land withdrawn from exploration and development, and expose the federal government to substantial takings liability given Resolution's ownership of valid existing rights in one of the largest undeveloped copper deposits in the world. The only purpose of this section is to permanently put these lands off limits to mining.



As stated in our Copper Fact Sheet, proposals to put lands off limits to mining or curtail mining on public lands are ill-considered policies that will increase our reliance on foreign minerals and disrupt domestic mineral supply chains. The United States can become a minerals supply chain powerhouse, but not if Congress withdraws lands from mineral entry and enacts policies putting lands off limits to mining. The withdrawal language in this legislation sets a horrible precedent and sends a strong antimining message from the federal government that will chill future investment in finding and developing domestic mineral resources. This language further exasperates our Nation's current dependency on foreign sources of critical minerals. In order for the United States to achieve its clean energy and new technology goals, public lands with mineral potential must remain open to mineral exploration and development.

The inescapable fact is America's clean energy and economic future are dependent on mining. We have to find a way to secure a domestic supply of the natural resources we have in abundant supply as safely and sustainably as possible. And in order to do that, we must find ways to balance economic development opportunities with environmental and tribal concerns.

As the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences recognized in a 1999 report, "Only a very small portion of the Earth's continental crust (less than 0.01%) contains economically viable mineral deposits. Thus, mines can only be located in those few places where economically viable mineral deposits were formed and discovered." The Arizona Copper Triangle is one of those rare places. If we cannot mine in the historic Copper Triangle area of our country, then where can we?

Passing this legislation would effectively shut the door on a project that would benefit Arizona and then entire nation and send a signal to other companies that America is closed for business when it comes to mining, no matter how responsible the approach.

That would be a huge mistake.

We urge you to consider the full picture and broader impact as you make your decision on this matter. Accordingly, we strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 1884 and vote no.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Thorne

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sara Thorne", is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

2021 WMC President

Emily Arthun

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Arthun", is enclosed within a black rectangular border.

WMC Coordinator