



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

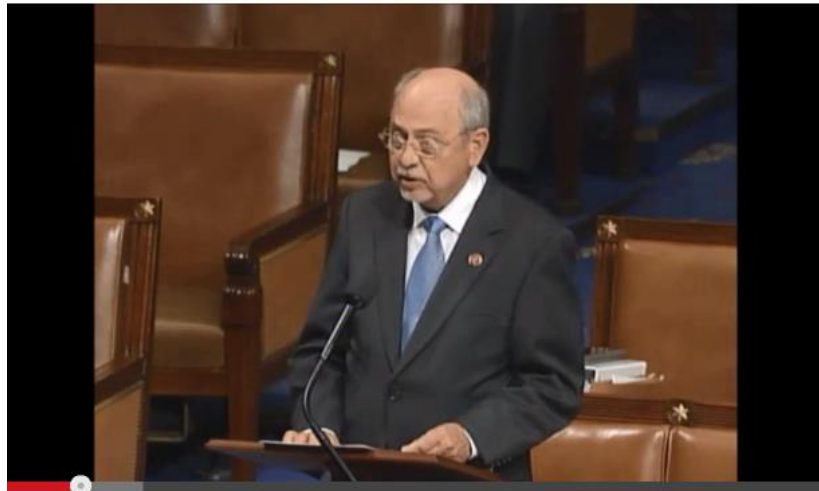
Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings: Increasing Domestic Production of Copper is Vital to Jobs, Economy & National Security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings delivered the following statement on the House floor today in support of H.R. 687, *The Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act*:



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“Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 687, the *Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act*.

As our Nation continues to suffer from high unemployment, a rising national debt, and annual deficits, Congress’ top priority should be advancing solutions that put Americans back to work and help strengthen and grow the economy. The bill before us today does just that.

The *Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act*, sponsored by my colleague and Natural Resources Committee Member Rep. Paul Gosar, is a bipartisan measure that will create thousands of new American jobs and boost our economy through increased U.S. mineral production.

The bill authorizes an equal-value land exchange between Resolution Copper and the federal government that will open up the third largest undeveloped copper resource in the world. The bill requires that the cost of the land exchange be fully paid for by the mine developer – ensuring fair treatment for taxpayers.

This project will provide substantial benefits to the United States and the state of Arizona in the form of job creation, economic growth and increased national security.

This mining project will support nearly 3,700 jobs. These are good paying, family wage American jobs that will equate to more than \$220 million in annual wages.

At a time when our economy continues to struggle, this mining project will provide a much needed boost through private investment. This mining activity will have over a \$60 billion economic impact and generate an estimated \$20 billion in total federal, state, county and local tax revenue. This bill is a perfect example of how safely and responsibly harnessing our resources will generate revenue and help get our economy back on track.

The importance of increased U.S. copper production cannot be overstated. Our Nation has become increasingly reliant on foreign countries for our mineral resources - placing our economic competitiveness and national security at risk. The U.S. currently imports 30 percent of the copper we need and we will continue to be dependent on foreign countries if we fail to develop our own resources here at home.

The copper produced from this single project is estimated to meet 25 percent of the United States' entire copper demand. This copper would be used for a variety of items ranging from medical devices, plumbing, computers and even hybrid cars. It's also essential for our national defense equipment and technology, including satellites, space and aviation, weapons guidance and communications.

The benefits and reasons to pass this bill are plentiful; however we will likely hear several inaccurate claims from those across the aisle who are opposed to mining in America. I would like to take a moment to set the record straight right from the beginning.

First, the bill follows the standard federal land appraisal process procedures issued by the Department of Justice, which has been used for decades. The appraisal requires full market value to be paid for both the land and the minerals located within. If by chance there is copper production beyond the appraised value, the mine developer will be required to pay the United States the difference. This would be assessed annually. This is an added guarantee to ensure that taxpayers get a fair return for the copper resources.

Second, this bill is about creating nearly 3,700 American jobs; it's not about helping foreign mining interests as some have charged. Opposing this mine and not producing copper in the U.S. is what truly benefits foreign nations by sending American jobs overseas and making us increasingly reliant on foreign sources of critical minerals.

Finally, the bill requires full compliance with environmental laws and tribal consultation prior to constructing the mine. This bill provides more conservation and protection of culturally sensitive, riparian and critical habitat than otherwise would occur. This bill does

NOT waive any existing laws or protections for sacred sites under federal law. It upholds the Native American Graves Preservation and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. It will NOT allow the desecration of any sacred areas. It does, however, specifically and permanently protect a site called *Apache Leap* that is well-known to be special to Arizonans and area tribes.

H.R. 687 is about creating new American jobs, strengthening our economy and decreasing our dependence on foreign minerals. The bill has broad support from over 50 local and national organizations and government entities, including Arizona Governor Jan Brewer, the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturing and the National Mining Association.

Furthermore, the Arizona Republic Editorial Board has endorsed this bill. They highlighted the bipartisan support from the Arizona Congressional delegation and noted that 'it has the potential to be an economic bonanza for our state and a national security boon to our country.'

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this bill to put Americans back to work and increase domestic production of the vitally important copper."

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