

**Statement of
Testimony of Michael O. Hing
Mayor, Town of Superior, Arizona
before the
United States House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests & Public Lands
concerning
HR.1904, Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act of 2011**

June 14, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Michael Hing. I am the Mayor of Superior, Arizona – a small town in Pinal County, about 65 miles southeast of Phoenix. Our town strongly supports H.R. 1904.

I am here today to discuss the future of my community. I represent a town that has gone through extremely rough economic times ...with unemployment rates even higher than the 12% unemployment our County is experiencing. However, we are on the verge of a major step forward. I am speaking about the economic development that will occur if Resolution Copper is able to expeditiously re-open and deepen the old Magma Mine, which operated in our community for more than 80 years. This land exchange represents an unprecedented opportunity to improve the long-term economic vitality of my community, our local counties, the state, and the region. It is one thing to talk about the creation of new jobs and economic opportunity, and quite another to actually take action...like H.R. 1904 does...that will expedite the creation of those jobs and result in large increases in local, State and Federal tax revenues.

Mr. Chairman, there are several very significant factors which make our Town ideally suited to host and service a re-opened mine at Oak Flat:

1. As this photo clearly shows, the Town of Superior is located less than a 10 minute drive from the mine site on State Highway 60. This provides excellent access to the mine for both workers and supplies, without needing to build major new access roads.
2. Highway 60 is one of the major east-west traffic arteries in Arizona, and is in the process of being up-graded to 4 lane status all the way to Superior. This, again, will assist the entire mining operation.
3. We are serviced by an active rail line that runs from Superior to Florence, where it interties directly to the Union Pacific rail system. This will greatly facilitate the transport of copper concentrate to smelting and market.
4. We have a skilled work force and housing/bed base that is begging to be utilized, and have many residents with mining experience.

5. Our area has numerous existing powerlines, power substations and other infrastructure that can service the mine. This will enable the operation to have far less environmental impact than if entirely new facilities need to be built.

But the most important elements of this project, Mr. Chairman, are human. Currently vast numbers of Superior residents are forced to commute into the Phoenix metro area and nearby towns at great expense and time to find employment. The lack of stable local employment has taken its toll on us. Families that have resided here for generations are moving away. This situation has not improved since the last time I addressed this committee.

I provided testimony to Congress on two previous occasions, of which I have attached copies. In my previous remarks, I discussed the importance of speedy passage of the land exchange to the economic and social well being of Superior and neighboring communities. I firmly believe that Superior and the residents of the surrounding areas have waited long enough for Congress to take action on this legislation. We need jobs and revenue now! We don't want to see our economic future studied, appealed and litigated to the point where the mine project is delayed for decades because it is on Federal land...or where the company pulls out altogether and takes the jobs and revenues overseas. Congress has had bills before it on this land exchange for 5 years now. It's time to act!

Elliott D. Pollack and Company – a prestigious economic and real estate consulting company commissioned by Resolution Copper – recently prepared an economic study of the proposed mining operation. This study, which was originally completed in 2008 and updated recently, provides a preview into the enormous economic and fiscal impacts of the construction and operation of the mine project. The study predicts a rather stunning **\$61.4 billion** of economic activity to the state over the life of the mine...\$61.4 billion! This is exactly the type of economic shot in the arm we need, and which our nation, and its large budget deficit, needs too. If we truly want jobs and revenue, Congress should be taking the bull by the horns and approving and expediting projects like this one.

Mining towns have seen their share of boom and bust. We have learned from this, and in partnership with Resolution Copper, have already taken steps to diversify our economy. To mark this partnership, the Town and Resolution Copper have entered into a landmark agreement providing funding for programs that will help Superior enhance business and residential opportunities. Resolution Copper has also voluntarily spent \$30 million to clean up the old tailings piles and other mining debris in our community...and will be spending \$20 million more to finish the job. They received a prestigious environmental award from Valley Forward, a Phoenix-based organization comprised of business and civic leaders, for doing that. They are funding programs at our schools that are expanding our students' intellectual horizons and increasing their math, science and technology skills.

They are a good local corporate citizen, as is demonstrated by the fact that they are headquartered right in our community, not at some distant location.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, the land exchange of H.R. 1904 will allow Superior to acquire lands adjacent to the town. Superior is only 4 square miles, and is almost completely surrounded by

public lands. The lands Superior will acquire through the exchange are crucial to attracting new development and will provide significant economic opportunities for us.

In conclusion, I believe Congress has an excellent opportunity to provide an ideal balance between the expansion of jobs, local and state revenues, and diverse economic activity while conserving ecologically sensitive and pristine lands for future generations. Unlike other economic stimulus plans, this legislation comes without a handout. I submit to you my sincere hope that this legislation can be swiftly approved so that the remarkable economic impacts of this exchange can begin to be fully implemented and realized as soon as humanly possible. We cannot afford to wait any longer. Our economic future is at stake.

I appreciate your consideration of this very important bill.

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