

**Testimony of Supervisor Bryan Martyn,
Pinal County
before the
United States House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and 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 Bryan Martyn. I serve as the Vice Chairman of the Pinal County Board of Supervisors. I am honored to testify before you today. I would also like to thank my good friend and our congressman, Dr. Paul Gosar, for inviting me to testify.

Prior to holding elected office, I served our country for 20 years as an Army AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot and as an Air Force Special Operations helicopter pilot. I fought in Desert Storm, Bosnia and served two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although my service often took me to foreign lands, I always yearned for the day to return home to Arizona to serve my country in another capacity. For this reason, I have stayed active in the issues that are critically important to my community. There are few issues that are more critical to Pinal County's economic growth, stability and quality of life than H.R. 1904.

Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss if I didn't personally acknowledge Pinal County Board Chairman Pete Rios who was originally slated to testify here today. He is home with his daughter who is due to give birth any day now. Nevertheless, I want to convey his strong support for H.R. 1904. Our third Board member, David Snider, also strongly supports this legislation. My Board is comprised of two Democrats and one Republican. My point is simple: this issue is not about politics; it's about enhancing the quality of life of the citizens in Pinal County and Arizona.

Allow me to give a brief background about Pinal County. It is located in the center of the state between Arizona's two largest counties, Maricopa (Phoenix) and Pima (Tucson) and is slightly larger than the state of Connecticut in area (approximately 5,386 square miles). In 1965, Pinal County's population was around 60,000. By 2000, the population had tripled to over 181,000. Today's population has exploded to more than 375,000 and by 2050 the population is estimated to be nearly two million people. There are over 3,000 counties in America. Pinal County is the second fastest growing county in the nation and it appears that this growth will continue for the foreseeable future.

Pinal County is defined by two distinct regions. The mountainous eastern part of the county is characterized by elevations as high as 6,000 feet and a predominance of copper mining that brings good-paying jobs to the area. The western part of the county is primarily low desert areas where irrigated farming has been the dominant feature of the land.

Only 25 percent of the land in Pinal County is privately owned. The other 75 percent is owned by federal, state or Tribal entities (35 percent is State Trust Land, 20 percent is Indian communities, 11 percent is BLM land, 6.5 percent is national forests, and 2.5 percent is parks/monuments). Consequently, the property tax base for the county is extremely modest. The rapid influx of residential property has outpaced retail and industrial properties. This growth has put severe strains on critical infrastructure needs, such as transportation, water, and energy services.

Mr. Chairman, please let me explain why this legislation is so critical to Pinal County and why our Board has made this our top priority.

First, as someone who grew up in Arizona, I believe that the things that made our state what it is today, in particular, our five C's -- cotton, copper, cattle, citrus and climate -- should continue to be our state's lifeblood. Over the past forty years, the new "C" of construction has changed the economic dynamic of the state. We have lost some of our diversity and because of the economic downturn, the state and County budgets have drowned our ability to provide some of the most basic services to our constituents. We must explore every opportunity to improve the spectrum of economic opportunities in Arizona. Copper was once known as "king". We now have an opportunity to turn Arizona's economy around that would help millions in our state.

With regard to mining, members of the Committee must understand that modern mining has evolved in dramatic fashion. This is not your granddad's copper mine. The days of stripping the land are behind us. Improvements in safety, operational technology and environmental controls clearly set this project apart. Based upon our working relationship with Resolution Copper to date, Pinal County believes that the Resolution project is going to be one of the most environmentally-sensitive mines in the nation. We, on the Board of Supervisors, plan to hold Resolution to the highest standard of environmental stewardship. Resolution Copper has already demonstrated through actions, not just lip service, that it is a good partner and dedicated to the residents of Pinal County and Arizona.

I see this in its commitment to education. The first full generation of workers for this mine is currently in fourth grade. Resolution Copper recognizes this and has obligated funding to local schools, community colleges and universities to ensure that the workforce in Pinal County has the necessary math, science and mechanical skills needed to work in this high-tech mine. It is important to note that Pinal County is a truly emerging county. Today, one in four of our high school graduates, is the first person in their family to graduate high school. The educational focus on math and science will change the future of our county.

Resolution Copper has also operated with consideration for the environment. It took over the nearly century-old Magma Mine site in Superior which required an extensive environmental cleanup. Resolution Copper was not obligated to complete this cleanup for decades, but voluntarily jumped headfirst into a \$50 million reclamation, which is already 60 percent complete. I have personally witnessed its progress and can sleep comfortably at night knowing that Resolution Copper's actions have ensured that we have a clean, safer, and healthier environment for our children and grandchildren.

In Arizona, we have an old say, “Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting.” Everyone is concerned about water and what water source will be used for the life of this project. One of the first questions I personally asked Resolution was where it planned to acquire water. Mr. Chairman, I was pleased to hear that Resolution Copper has been banking water and will have secured the entire water supply for the life of the project before the first ounce of copper comes out of the ground.

Additionally, Resolution has already spent literally millions of dollars on water studies in the area to date. These studies have indicated that there will be no impact on the water supply of Superior, Globe-Miami, San Carlos or any other community. It is because of this that I am certain that the future of the regional water supply is secure.

I should also point out that water quality is one of my primary “quality of life” concerns. Resolution Copper’s activities will be closely monitored by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), under authority delegated to it by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In Arizona, our water quality is regulated at standards that meet or exceed EPA requirements. These standards are non-negotiable. Resolution Copper must meet or exceed these standards if they want to operate in Arizona.

Most importantly, Mr. Chairman, we cannot ignore the massive economic benefits this project will bring. Pinal County *and* Arizona have a potential windfall in our backyard that will offer much needed job and economic opportunities. Pinal County currently has a nearly 15 percent unemployment rate. The unemployment rate on our Indian reservations is more than triple that number. We desperately need jobs. The Resolution Copper project will put over 1,400 people into high-paying jobs. These jobs have the potential to create more than \$40 billion in economic activity.

As elected leaders, it is critical that we send a positive message about economic development to our citizens and to the world. Namely, that Pinal County, Arizona, and America are open for business. This project alone will yield more than \$8 billion in new revenue to the federal treasury and another \$2 billion to state, county and local governments. As Senator Jon Kyl puts it, this legislation is “a stimulus without a handout.”

Pinal County has not been immune to the negative effects of the recent recession. While still growing, the County yearns for good, high-paying jobs. The Resolution Copper project is one of the biggest economic development projects in Arizona and the largest in Pinal County. The average annual projected pay is slated to be approximately \$70,000 per year for a County that has double-digit unemployment and an average wage that is less than half of what Resolution Copper will provide its employees.

Lastly, as you know, Mr. Chairman, H.R.1904 brings over 5,000 acres of unique and valuable conservation properties into public ownership. This includes the 3,050 acre 7B Ranch property parcel in Pinal County that covers seven miles on both sides of the renowned San Pedro River, and immediately abuts conservation lands downstream from it that are managed by the Nature Conservancy and others. The Conservancy has observed that the 7B Ranch is one of the top three

conservation priorities on the entire river, and is part of one of, and I quote, “most critical and irreplaceable migration corridors in the western hemisphere for neo-tropical birds”.

In many ways, this legislation exemplifies why we chose this profession; to improve the quality of life of our constituents. This project represents all we value as Americans: stewardship of our environment, improved education of our children and our workforce, enhanced economic prosperity and the ability to make a better future for those around us.

I urge you to join me and the citizens of Pinal County in support for this project, and I urge the Committee to quickly adopt and pass H.R. 1904.

Mr. Chairman, thanks again for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to any questions the Subcommittee may have.

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