

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Raul Grijalva
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing
June 14, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Three of the measures before the Subcommittee today – your legislation, Mr. Boren’s HALE Scouts bill, and Mr. Larsen’s Wild and Scenic River bill – are non-controversial measures that have already passed the House. In fact, I would like it noted that your bill, Mr. Chairman, passed the House *twice* while I was the Chairman of this Subcommittee. We look forward to any updates on these measures from our witnesses today.

The Waco Mammoth bill *also* passed the House last Congress, with 85 Republicans voting to support the measure. Unfortunately, the version introduced this Congress is drastically different from that popular, bipartisan measure. Along with other harmful changes, the bill *prohibits all federal funding* for this proposed new National Park unit.

This attempt to provide the Waco Mammoth National Monument with the national status and NPS expertise it deserves, while denying the unit any federal funding, is contradictory and unworkable. The Administration will lay out the fatal flaws in this approach and it is my hope the Subcommittee will revert to the version of this bill which received such overwhelming

support from both Democrats and Republicans last Congress.

The Lower Merced bill is problematic as well. Amending an existing Wild and Scenic River designation to allow the river to be inundated would be a significant step, to be taken only under very serious circumstances. It is not clear that the changes proposed by the Merced Irrigation District are actually necessary for flood control and thus, this unprecedented proposal to amend the Wild and Scenic designation must be considered very carefully.

Finally, I fundamentally oppose the land exchange mandated by H.R. 1904, the Resolution Copper legislation. On behalf of the local environmental community, local Native Peoples and the American taxpayers, I worked hard as the Chairman of this Subcommittee to prevent this legislation from moving forward and intend to continue doing so as the Ranking Member.

The known impacts of H.R. 1904 are bad enough. The vast, lucrative mining operation authorized by this legislation will harm an area richly blessed with cultural, recreational and scenic resources and will do so for the benefit of a wealthy, multinational mining conglomerate.

But the *unknown* impacts of this giant mine raise even more serious concerns. Among the unanswered questions are:

- Could the proposed mining operations under Apache Leap cause it to subside or even collapse?**
- What are the potential health impacts for those living and working in southeastern Arizona?**
- What are the potential impacts on the quality and quantity of water in this already drought-plagued area?**

- **Just how much profit do Rio Tinto and BHP-Billiton stand to make over the life of this mine?**
- **How reliable are the company's employment and economic impact projections?**

The list of unknowns goes on and on and the reason we have no answers to these critical questions is because H.R. 1904 short-circuits fundamental, good-government policies – such as full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and robust, government-to-government consultation with Native People – that must take place *before* the decision to allow this project to move forward is made.

In the end, the real question is, if the Resolution Copper proposal is truly in the best interests of the American public, why does the legislation include so many instances where the public's right to know is short-circuited?

We will look forward to the insights of our witnesses to explain this and other serious problems with this legislation.

I yield back.