

Opening Statement  
H.R. 1904: Resolution Copper  
Subcommittee Ranking Member Grijalva  
Full Committee Mark-up  
July 13, 2011

**Mr. Chairman,**

**H.R. 1904 will rob *Native* People of their heritage;**

**it will rob *local* people of their water;**

**and it will rob the *American* people of their money.**

**This legislation is an abdication of our responsibilities as stewards of the public lands and the public trust -- it must be rejected.**

**This committee routinely considers land exchanges. It is our responsibility to weigh the merits of each proposal to determine whether it is in the best interests of the American people. Some proposals facilitate public recreation, some help local communities build courthouses or schools, and some serve environmental goals.**

**The land exchange required by H.R. 1904 serves no such purposes. Rather, this legislation will take thousands of acres of healthy, protected, sacred, public land and convert it into billions of dollars in corporate profits for two foreign mining companies.**

**H.R. 1904 trades away several sites that are sacred to Native People. The hearing record includes desperate pleas from the San Carlos Apache, White Mountain Apache, Yavapai-Apache, Tonto Apache, Fort McDowell Yavapai, Hualapai, Jicarilla Apache, Mescalero Apache, the Pueblo of Zuni and others to respect their religious and cultural traditions.**

**Instead, the bill waives compliance with NEPA, the Native American Graves Protection Act, and all other statutes that might give Tribes a voice. The final insult comes when the bill requires consultation with Native People – AFTER the land exchange has already occurred.**

**The legislation also threatens to de-water a large and already drought-prone area – turning it from an arid but functioning landscape, into a desert. According to testimony received by the Subcommittee, a mining operation like the one planned by Resolution Copper requires an estimated 40,000 acre-feet of water per year. That is roughly the amount of water used by the city of Tempe, Arizona.**

**The company does not own any water rights and has failed to indicate where the water for the mining operation will come from. Historically, mining companies have simply sunk wells deeper than their neighbors and taken the water they need.**

**A federal mining permit process, along with compliance with NEPA and other laws, might mitigate or at least explore these concerns but the legislation allows Resolution Copper to skip these steps, leaving the people of Southeastern Arizona in grave danger of severe water shortages.**

**Finally, the legislation will allow Resolution Copper to realize billions in profits without guaranteeing a fair return to the current owners of this land – the American people. The bill contains appraisal and payment provisions but the language is non-standard, and in some cases literally unique. Why are such provisions necessary when a simple, straight-forward royalty**

**would provide a fair and predictable return for the taxpayers?**

**At a time when we are told that everyone from college students, to the elderly must accept drastic cuts to basic federal programs, it is unconscionable that we would approve a massive transfer of wealth from the American people to a foreign-owned mining company without insisting on fair value.**

**Mr. Chairman, this is special interest legislation that is not in the interest of the American people. I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 1904.**