

SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE
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Wendsler Nosie, Sr., Tribal Chairman
San Carlos Apache Tribe

The San Carlos Apache Tribe of Arizona has strongly been opposed to S.409 as this bill negatively impacts our historic cultural activity as well as our sacred and religious site. The San Carlos Apache Tribe has taken a strong and courageous stance opposing this legislation and our voice opposing this bill has been echoed across this country and will remain steadfast for the people of the San Carlos and surrounding communities.

In the 1850s, boundaries were beginning to be drawn to confine Apaches to a specific area separating them from their ancestral homelands. However, that separation did not prevent the Apaches from continuing to practice their religious ceremonies at Oak Flat, the sacred site. This is the sacred area that the Apaches and other southwest tribes came to pray and held healing ceremonies for centuries.

It is important that the people of the San Carlos Apache Tribe will continue to exercise and practice their religion and not be deterred by actions of the federal government or members of a government. Oak Flat, the deep canyons, the water, and medicinal plants have long provided and continues to provide spiritual guidance and protection, to us, to our children, and our future.

The negative environmental impact to our surrounding lands are enormous with this mining proposal and the stewards of the laws of our lands overturning President Eisenhower's Public Land Order #1229 in 1955 are beyond comprehension. Unfortunately, water, a vital source to our livelihood, medicinal plants and wildlife in Oak Flat and the surrounding communities is at stake. Should Rio Tinto have its way in congress, the water, very likely will become a hazardous material for years to come, the air will likely have toxic fumes, and the land will be dug up and left barren with mixtures of unsafe elements. The end result is an unsafe environment for the people of the local communities, the natural resources and wildlife.

The Energy and Resource committee may have approve this bill to be submitted to the house and senate to be voted on but the current progress to aggressively fight this measure that caters to a foreign company at the expense of our natural resources will not subside.

Should S.409 be passed by congress with special blessings by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and John Kyle (R-AZ) along with Representative Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), it will leave an everlasting toll on all those living in the surrounding area including the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

Should you need information or would like to assist please contact our office @ (928) 475-2361.