

Opinion Editorial

Response to Donald Trump's Support of Resolution Copper Mine Project

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"One day after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued an injunction preventing the Forest Service from transferring ownership of Oak Flat to Resolution Copper, the CEOs of both parent companies owning Resolution Copper were at the White House complaining about the injunction. In response, President Trump issued a characteristically juvenile social media post, in which he called the 9th Circuit Court a "Radical Left Court" and the plaintiffs bringing the action "Radical Left Activists" and "Anti-American." As Adelita Grijalva (currently running for the Arizona Congressional seat her father held for 20+ years) pointed out, "Donald Trump is blatantly attempting to strong-arm the courts" with his social media post.

Trump's nonsensical social media post also says "our Country, quite simply, needs Copper – AND NOW!" For what do we need a massive new copper mine, though – particularly this one? This Administration has done much to kill renewable energy and de-carbonizing the economy doesn't seem to be a priority any longer – not that mining our way out of global warming is a real possibility anyway. National defense is raised as another supposed reason, but how is shipping all of Resolution's copper concentrate offshore for smelting going to bolster our national defense? It won't.

Let's be clear about the nature of the Resolution Copper mine. It is owned by Rio Tinto and BHP, 55% and 45%, respectively. So, all the profits from the mine would flow to these offshore corporations. The copper would also go offshore for smelting and finishing because there is not copper smelting capacity currently available in the USA for the Resolution mine's copper. There have also been no plans for any new domestic copper smelter proposed. The only long-term effects on the USA and Arizona of this mine would be a huge crater (two miles across and 1,000 feet deep) where Oak Flat used to be, and 1.4 billion tons of toxic mine waste that must be contained in perpetuity. And here is the real kicker – if the Resolution mine is built it will use at least 250 billion gallons of water that Arizona simply does not have to spare.

How is it "Anti-American" to preserve a site that is on The National Register of Historic Places for its sacred value to Indian tribes? How is it radical left activism to insist that people keep the water they need to live?"

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