



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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C.H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

March 25, 2010

The Honorable Tom J. Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Re: **Rosemont Mine**

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your January 20, 2010 letter regarding the Rosemont Mine proposed for the Santa Rita Mountains portion of the Coronado National Forest south of Tucson, Arizona. We also appreciated Jay Jensen's visit to this area last fall. We have been participating as a cooperating agency in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for the proposed mine. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is scheduled to be released during the month of April.

We understood from your letter and Mr. Jensen's comments during his visit, that you would be reviewing several items before the release of the draft EIS, including (1) the validity of Rosemont Copper's unpatented claims, (2) whether it is legal to deposit waste rock on such claims, and (3) whether there is a legal basis for enabling the Forest Service Supervisor to select the no-action alternative, essentially denying the mine, in light of competing interests for the protection of Forest Service lands.

From a recent cooperating agency meeting, Forest Service staff stated that they have not had any direction to evaluate this mining proposal any differently than had been their previous interpretation. Does this mean that you've found the claims valid? Will the Forest Service assume the claims are available for waste disposal under their current status as lode claims? Do you uphold the narrow interpretation of the Forest Service Supervisors decision-making authority or are you still reviewing these issues?

We are also wishing to better understand the roles of the Department of Interior and Agriculture with regard to the decisions to be made. While it is clear that U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would have to make a decision with regard to any direct impacts

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on BLM land, we would like to know what if any additional responsibilities the Department of Interior might have.

We would appreciate a timely response since the draft EIS is due out next month. Thank you for your continued attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/dr

c: The Honorable Gabrielle Giffords, Member, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Member, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Chairman and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Jay Jensen, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment
Jeanine Derby, Forest Supervisor, Coronado National Forest