



Inter Tribal Association of Arizona

21 TRIBAL NATIONS

Resolution No. 0221

Objection to the Sandy Valley Lithium Project

- Ak-Chin Indian Community
Cocopah Tribe
Colorado River Indian Tribes
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
Gila River Indian Community
Havasupai Tribe
Hopi Tribe
Hualapai Tribe
Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians
Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Pueblo of Zuni
Quechan Tribe
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
San Carlos Apache Tribe
San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
Tohono O'odham Nation
Tonto Apache Tribe
White Mountain Apache Tribe
Yavapai-Apache Nation
Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
- WHEREAS,** the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, Inc., an association of 21 tribal governments in Arizona, provides a forum for tribal governments to advocate for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns and to join in united action to address these concerns; and
- WHEREAS,** the Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona have the authority to act to further their collective interests as sovereign tribal governments; and
- WHEREAS,** the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona has the charge to support and represent particular Member Tribes on matters directly affecting them upon their request; and
- WHEREAS,** the ancestral lands the Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona span the entire State of Arizona and these lands contain sacred sites and culturally and historically important places and landscapes; and
- WHEREAS,** the Hualapai Tribe acknowledges and holds sacred a vast cultural landscape in northwestern Arizona that encompasses the area surrounding Wikieup, Arizona, including archaeological sites and other traditional cultural places, as well as plant, wildlife, and water resources; and
- WHEREAS,** the Hualapai Tribe owns 360 acres of land encompassing Cholla Canyon Ranch, where Ha'Kamwe' (Cofer Hot Springs) is located; and
- WHEREAS,** Ha'Kamwe' (Cofer Hot Springs) and the surrounding cultural landscape in which it is located is considered ancestral to the Hualapai people and it continues to be revered as patrimony and integral to the identity of the Hualapai people; and
- WHEREAS,** Cofer Hot Springs was determined by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be a Traditional Cultural Property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; and
- WHEREAS,** an Australian mining company, Hawkstone Mining Limited, dba Big Sandy, Inc., conducted exploratory drilling for lithium clays on BLM land immediately adjacent to Hualapai land (Cholla Canyon Ranch) in 2018-2019; and
- WHEREAS,** Hawkstone has recently applied for additional, more expansive, exploration (referred to as the Sandy Valley Lithium Project) on mining claims located on BLM land immediately adjacent Hualapai land, which would create significant surface and subsurface disturbances resulting from the development of 145 drill pads, a bulk sample site, 12.5 miles of heavy equipment access roads, and other associated facilities and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2020, the BLM denied the Hualapai Tribe's request to participate in the BLM's environmental review of the Sandy Valley Lithium Project, despite the expertise and specialized knowledge that the Hualapai Tribe could have provided to the BLM's review of the Project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws; and

WHEREAS, on April 12, 2021, the BLM released its environmental analysis of the Project without meaningful and proper input from the Hualapai Tribe, which was grossly insufficient and disregarded the impacts of the Project on cultural resources, religious concerns, traditional values and life ways, environmental justice, visual resources, water resources and water quality; and

WHEREAS, should any further destruction or disturbance be permitted by the BLM, this cultural landscape and the fragile desert resources within it will be irreparably harmed; and

WHEREAS, should future mining activity at this place be approved under the current proposal, the Tribe's ability to operate Cholla Canyon Ranch for beneficial purposes, including ceremonial purposes, or for economic pursuits, such as tribal horticulture uses or other uses, will be irreparably harmed; and

WHEREAS, the permitting of extractive mining activities adjacent to Hualapai land (Cholla Canyon Ranch), including exploration that would lead to full-scale open-pit mining, would constitute a serious abrogation of Federal Trust obligations of the United States, as well as an affront to tribal sovereignty and principles of environmental justice.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona hereby objects to the development of the Sandy Valley Lithium Project within the Hualapai Tribe's ancestral lands, which will result in devastating impacts to significant cultural and spiritual resources; threaten long term tribal water rights and quality; cause irreparable harm to the Tribe's ability to continue cultural activities and to pursue economic development of Cholla Canyon Ranch; and result in long term ecological destruction of a fragile desert environment, including plant and animal species with cultural significance.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona stands with the Hualapai Tribe in its opposition to the Sandy Valley Lithium Project and any future development of an open pit mine at this place of cultural importance, and urges the BLM to properly consult with and carefully listen to the expertise and concerns of the Hualapai Tribe regarding this harmful project and take all necessary actions to protect this special place from harm and to fulfill its trust responsibility to the Hualapai Tribe on the Project.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was presented and duly adopted at a meeting of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, where a quorum was present on **Friday, April 30, 2021.**



Shan Lewis,
President, Inter Tribal Association of Arizona
Vice-Chairman, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe