Southwest Lithium Resistance Convergence Statement

Communities impacted by lithium mining speak out against using the Defense Production Act to expand domestic mining

From March 25-27 frontline community members and allied organizations met to discuss the lithium mining rush currently occurring in Arizona, California, and Nevada. We met to build a growing network of solidarity to protect sacred places, land, air, and water from the impacts of mining. We are deeply concerned about news that President Biden is considering invoking the Defense Production Act to expand domestic mining and have drafted the following statement in response.

Day Hinkey, Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribal Member, and member of Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain)

We deeply oppose President Biden's executive order for the Defense Production Act for precious minerals. This is a second invasion, destruction of cultural lands, and eliminating our Indigenous history. I believe this is gonna be the second coming of environmental destruction. The first we're in now is the climate crisis from the fossil fuel industry, and I believe this next one will be lithium mining.

I am opposing two mines. I am opposing Peehee Mu'huh known as Thacker Pass in our language. That's our cultural lands, two massacres on that site, we want that protected. I'm also opposing Jindalee resources. In our cultural history, that's another sacred site of ours, called Disaster Peak. It's very important and very sacred to us. There's wildlife up there, there's trout, there's a cedar tree up there. That is very important to us. Water is life. That's not just a slogan, it's what we all need to survive. In this climate right now, we are suffering in drought, and everyone needs water. Lithium is going to contaminate a ton of water. We need this water to survive for drinking water and our foods.

Gary McKinney, Duckvalley Paiute Shoshone Tribal Member, and Spokesperson of Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain)

In regards to the Defense Production Act, it is now time for the NCAI (National Congress of American Indians) to step up with us to protect our sacred sites and our cultural sites. Resolution passed by the NCAI AK-21-027 with 13 for and 0 against 0 abstaining. We need you now to step up with us to protect our cultural sites from extraction, colonialism, and capitalism. Also to the Intertribal council of Nevada, resolution number 30-itcn-2021, to ask that you help us denounce the Defense Production Act because we are here as human beings.

Those of you listening, we need to protect our cultural sites because they mean something to us. Our massacre sites, our burial sites, our cultural sites, our medicines, our roots, our water, our air. We need to protect that. We need to start setting up things so that we're not being

sacrificed for capitalism. We have statements from the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation to help us. It has been done before. We need that kind of help.

The Indigenous communities should be concerned if this executive order is signed. Our cultural history is at stake here and the people must know how inconsiderate extractive mining can really be in regards to that. Desecration is no answer to solving America's lithium demand.

Crystal Wellington, Hualapai Tribal Member
I would like to say no lithium mining, no copper mining, on ancestral lands.

Indelda Sam, Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Member and Elder, member of Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain)
We don't want no mining on our ancestral land on Peehee Mu'huh, thank you.

Shailene Gonzales, **Youth on the Hualapai Nation**
No mining on any ancestral lands. Those are homelands to our people and our ancestors. Not only will you be removing a lot of things, you'll also be removing history that needs to remain there for us as youth to carry on. It's sacred to us, I think it's something that we hold and cherish, not only as youth, for your children and our children. We all need water to live and we are all human beings. Water is life, let's protect the water together.

Ashley McKinney, Bois Fort Chippewa Tribal Member, member of Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain)
A bounty of lithium was found in the heart of Peehee Mu'huh. They destroyed the hunting and medicine grounds. They will cut out the heart of Peehee Mu'huh leaving a dark abyss. Peehee Mu'huh and the mountain, the red mountain people will never be the same again. Once again, the women and children cry under Peehee Mu'huh. This is a little poem from a youth from my reservation of Duck Valley, a 16 year old, and she has been a part of the movement, coming and visiting, and she wrote that little quote or poem you can say. I don't agree with what is happening, being Gary's wife and seeing what kinds of impact it's going to have on the land and the Indigenous communities around the land that's supposed to be going up. Mni Wiconi, Water is Life, Protect our Land, Defend the sacred. We have to protect the land for our youth and our kids.

Janice Gonzales, Fish Lake Valley

I'm from Fish Lake Valley, Nevada. I am an Indigenous person speaking on behalf of my family in Dyer, Nevada where Ioneer lithium mine is planning on starting a mine in the cave springs area. There is an endangered species, the Tiehm's buckwheat plant, which is there in the site where they are trying to start digging. I found out recently that Tiehm's buckwheat plant is used for native medicine and other spiritual ways. I'm also very concerned that mine construction will destroy important cultural and spiritual sites in the area. I wish that Ioneer would just go away and just stop.

Daranda Hinkey, Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Member and Secretary of Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (the People of Red Mountain)

I oppose the Thacker Pass lithium mine as well as other future lithium mines being proposed near and around my ancestral homelands and other tribal communities. I'm wary of lithium because I do think they are pushing something that's not green and will be the next cultural genocide of Indigenous people. I also think that in this extractive society and capitalism it is a lot of take take take and I think that needs to be stopped or halted, or look into another way. I also think that Tribal consultation needs to be done differently, that if companies and mining companies and pipelines come through, if they do come to tribal communities, that tribal communities can say no.