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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0301**

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ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS**

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill, we urge you to block all funding for the listing of a public campground in Pinal County, Arizona, known as Oak Flat, in the National Register of Historic Places as announced by the National Park Service on March 4, 2016.

Oak Flat is currently on Forest Service land and is slated to be transferred to Resolution Copper, a private mining company, as part of the bipartisan Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act passed by congress and signed into public law in December 2014. Following signing of the bill into law, environmental groups and other mining opponents encouraged the Forest Service and National Park Service to list the Oak Flat Campground as a historical site in a deceitful attempt to quietly undermine the copper project. The Oak Flat Campground has never been a historic site and is more than 20 miles away from the nearest tribe's reservation. Dale Miles, a member of the San Carlos Tribe and the former tribal historian, confirmed this fact in an op-ed featured in the Arizona Republic dated July 23, 2015.

In addition to the lack of evidence or precedence to substantiate the claim that the site has historic cultural significance, the controversial proposal to list Oak Flat as a Historic Site has raised bipartisan concern due to the lack of detail and transparency in the nominating process. Three different bipartisan letters were sent asking for withdrawal of the nomination and expressing significant concerns that the nomination did not provide adequate information about

the area being nominated or follow the proper regulations for notice and comment from the public under the Administrative Procedures Act. The agency repeatedly withheld and redacted important locational data and other information associated with this nomination. After finally properly identifying the land being nominated in the Federal Register, the Park Service allowed less than five business days to comment before closing the comment period. Given the repeated lack of detail and lack of notice at every stage of filing it was nearly impossible for Arizonans who may be affected by this misguided designation to participate in the public comment process.

The agency's attempt to silence public comments through deceptive notices and short comment periods is inexcusable. The Resolution Copper Mine will be the largest copper mine in North America, supplying 25% of the nation's copper supply. Estimates indicate that the mine will create 3,700 new jobs and generate 60 billion dollars for our economy. This historic site listing could postpone job creation and cause further delays to an already lengthy NEPA process which was recently estimated to take 1,709 days on average. A bipartisan Congress and the president have declared the land exchange which enabled the expansion of this copper mine to be the law of the land. We can't allow for unnecessary delays to occur as a result of an unwarranted political listing.

Accordingly, we ask that you include language similar to the following:

*"Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out a listing of Chi'chil Bildagoteel (Oak Flats) Historic District Traditional Cultural Property in the National Register of Historic Places as published by the National Park Service on February 29, 2016 (81 Fed. Reg. 10276); or any successor or substantially related Notice or guidance.*

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress