



Dear Mr. Rozas,

August 15, 2022

We are writing to ask for your support in protecting the Cataract Creek Wash watershed which is critical to the residents of Williams Arizona, and to the residents of Coconino County who live nearby. Drake Cement LLC, has staked a claim to mine pozzolan (volcanic ash) within this watershed.

Bill Williams Mountain was identified by both the City of Williams and the USDA Forest Service as a critical resource deserving special protection from catastrophic wildfire in the Greater Williams Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2005). It is an important sacred site and traditional use area to several Southwestern tribes and has been determined eligible as a traditional cultural property.

Williams relies heavily on the Cataract Creek Wash watershed to provide domestic drinking water. Any large natural or mining operation caused wild fire on the mountain would likely result in flooding, which could run into Cataract Creek and into city reservoirs. This would result in long lasting impacts and could potentially prove catastrophic. This location is also a residential area, and for those living next to the mine there would be potential health hazards. Pozzolan contains crystalline silica, which upon long-term exposure may produce bronchitis, silicosis, and potentially lung cancer. Despite Drake's standard boiler plate mitigation measures, they would not be able to control all the dust generated from and open pit mine.

The Forest Service should be thinking prevention versus mitigation.

A mine in this location would also degrade camping, hiking, hunting, and tourism. It would further degrade Mexican Spotted Owl habitat. As Drake Cement continues expanding its footprint, these mines now become more of a regional issue. I think it is time for the EPA to analyze the significant cumulative effects of open pit mines. Especially when they are in close proximity to residential areas and sensitive ecosystems.

Common pozzolan is not more important than drinking water. This proposed mine is another case in point why the federal 1872 mining law needs to be reformed. Federal land managers are on record declaring that the 1872 Mining Law gives them no choice but to permit mining, no matter if the land is better used for recreation, conservation, or even a critical watershed.

We know we need mines, but federal and state land managers must have the ability to deny leases when its warranted. In the meantime, We are afraid the Forest Service will rubber stamp its approval for this particular mine unless you get involved. Can you reasonably influence or constrain the Forest Service so that this particular mining lease is not issued?

We appreciate any consideration you give to engaging the U.S. Forest Service on this matter.

Respectfully,

A large, handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is highly stylized and cursive, appearing to read "John &amp; Kerry-Lynn Moede". It spans across the width of the page, overlapping the printed name below it.

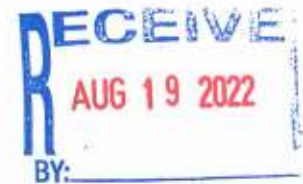
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