

Arizona Mountaineering Club  
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**Written Testimony to the United States House of Representatives concerning  
Southeast Land Exchange and Conservation Act of 2007 (S 1862 and HB 3301)  
by John Keedy, President, Arizona Mountaineering Club**

As the President of the Arizona Mountaineering Club (AMC), the oldest and largest rock climbing and mountaineering club in Arizona with nearly 400 active dues paying members and literally 1,000's of past members, I want to take this opportunity to communicate our opposition to Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act of 2007 (Senate Bill S.1862 and House Bill H.B.3301) introduced in the 110th Session of the United States Congress by Senator Jon Kyl and Representative Ed Pastor, respectively. After several years of carefully following the course of events and analyzing the various policy choices concerning Oak Flats and Queen Creek, the Board of Directors of the Arizona Mountaineering Club on September 10, 2007 voted unanimously to oppose this legislation.

Please know that no other climbers or climbing organization can speak for our members or represent the position of the AMC. We truly speak for the majority of Arizona rock climbers and mountaineers.

We have many concerns with the current legislation as submitted;

1. We are highly concerned about the environmental damage and lack of safeguards that Governor Napolitano mentioned in recent communications to the congressional delegation. We are opposed to mining that will destroy the surface of the land (surface subsidence) if other mining techniques could be used. We are concerned about water resources that will be needed for the mining operation as well as probable contamination of aquifers and streams in the area. We are concerned about the disposition of the extremely large amount of tailings and waste products that this large scale mining operation will produce. These very serious environmental questions need to be addressed.
2. We are highly concerned about the many issues raised by the San Carlos Apache community and the strong support they are receiving from so many other Native American

communities in Arizona and beyond.

3. We believe that no any action should be taken on this new legislation until many of these valid concerns and issues are addressed and especially with the possible reform of the Mining Act of 1872 being discussed. We are in favor of the passing of H.R. 2262: The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2007 with regards to the environmental safeguards of our lands.

4. While we support the effort of the State of Arizona to pursue a rock climbing park ("Tamo"), we do not support the idea Tamo is replacement for the 1,000's of rock climbing routes in the Oak Flats/Queen Creek area that will be lost if the legislation passes. Queen Creek climbing is within a very easy drive of the Phoenix metroplex whereas Tamo is further away. Tamo does not have the great variety of moderate climbs that appeal to the majority of rock climbers that Queen Creek has. Tamo is on public land. All that is needed is a serviceable road and guaranteed right of way to get there.

5. The AMC was never a party to the license agreement worked out between the Access Fund and Resolution Copper and the AMC was never contacted for its input. We have serious concerns about the substance of the License Agreement and feel that any climbing area being discussed must entail permanent and full legal access.

6. Oak Flats/Queen Creek (which is located in the middle of a well established mining district) was protected and specifically withdrawn from any mining activity over 50 years ago by President Eisenhower. Although erasing this withdrawal order via a land exchange isn't illegal-employing such a method for removing a long established public lands protective order certainly smacks of back room dealings and is clearly a less than transparent means of overturning the obvious intent of the withdrawal, which was permanent protection of Oak Flat/Queen Creek.

7. We believe it is bad public policy to ever transfer ownership of federally protected recreation land to a foreign company where the results will be the loss of public enjoyment of hiking, horseback riding, camping, bird watching, bouldering, rock climbing, canyoneering, hunting, mountain bike riding, 4-wheel driving, and from which United States citizens do not receive royalties.

The Arizona Mountaineering Club opposes the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act of 2007, and the manner in which it circumvents the public scrutiny, environmental oversight, and other federal policies that protect the land and people.

Sincerely,

John Keedy, President

c.c.

The Honorable John McCain, US Senate

The Honorable Jon Kyl, US Senate

The Honorable Ed Pastor, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Mitchell, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Jeff Flake, US House of Representatives

The Honorable John Shadegg, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Trent Franks, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Gabriella Giffords, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Ron Wyden, US Senate, Public Lands and Forests Committee

The Honorable Larry Craig, US Senate, Public Lands and Forests Committee

The Honorable Raul Grijalva, US House of Representatives, National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Committee

The Honorable Rob Bishop, US House of Representatives, National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Committee

The Honorable Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano

The Honorable Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer