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June 10, 2014

Mr. Neil Bosworth, Forest Supervisor
Tonto National Forest
2324 East Mc Dowell Road
Phoenix, AZ 85006

File Code: 1950/2810

Re: Gila County Comments in response to scoping letter regarding Resolution Baseline Hydrological and Geotechnical Data Gathering Activities

Dear Forest Supervisor Bosworth,

In response to the request for public comment regarding the proposed Plan of Operations (Plan) for the Resolution Baseline Hydrological and Geotechnical Data Gathering Activities, the Gila County Board of Supervisors would like to provide the following comments. Although not located with the geographic boundaries of Gila County, Resolution Copper has and will continue to create an economic benefit to Gila County, and as such, Gila County has a special interest in this proposal. We are a rural county with a population of 53,144, of which 12% are unemployed and 21% are living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Within this project, the proposed new construction would create disturbance on a total of 31.74 acres of previously undisturbed Tonto Forest Land, while the majority of the proposal would impact another 61.24 acres of previously disturbed land or existing roadways. Given that the Tonto Forest is comprised of nearly three million acres, this represents an incredibly small amount of impacted land, for the return benefit of gathering the baseline data necessary to advance this project to the next stage.

Resolution is entitled to conduct operations that are reasonably incidental to exploration and development of mineral deposits on its unpatented mining claims pursuant to U.S. Mining Laws. In addition, we believe that this proposed Plan of Activities is consistent with the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) of 1985 as

amended, and that the mineral exploration, development and operational activities as outlined in this proposed plan will be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impact on the Tonto Nation Forest surface resources as codified in 36 CFR Part 28.

As part of the engineering and environmental phase, this proposed action gathers data on the future potential tailings storage site. Resolution Copper, LLC has been engaged in ongoing discussions with local private land owners, and the proposed location addresses the local residents' concerns and issues. After reviewing the

Resolution Copper has spent the past ten years and several million dollars developing plans to access the additional copper ore body that was discovered in 1996. The economic benefit to the local area as well as to Arizona will continue for at least another 50 years with an estimated economic benefit of more than \$61 billion over the expected 60 year lifespan of the operation, including an estimated \$20 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue and more than \$14 billion in wages.

In Gila County, we recognize and understand the importance of protecting our natural resources while providing opportunities and access to those whose livelihoods depend on resources located on federal land as well as access for multiple use, multi-cultural activities, and multi-recreational opportunities to the public. Historically, our economy and our residents have depended heavily upon resource-based industries and, more recently, upon recreation opportunities on federal land. We appreciate that we must take care of the land, but we need to be able to use the land to take care of ourselves.

The Gila County Board of Supervisors thanks you for the opportunity to comment and requests to be kept informed and included in the process as this analysis continues.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Pastor
Chairman
Gila County Board of Supervisors

Date