



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #NGF-09-001

### **TITLE: To Protect Oak Flat and Apache Leap in Arizona from Mining**

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, traditional tribal life is rooted in a deep and personal understanding of the natural world and the forces that govern it; the source of tribal health, happiness, strength, and balance is the natural world, making our relationship with the natural world sacred; and

**WHEREAS**, in Southeastern Arizona, Oak Flat (Chichil bildagotel), Apache Leap, Devil's Canyon (Gan Bikoh) and Queen Creek (Gan Daszin) are places that are special, full of life, death, and holiness and represent elements that make us who we are. The sources that continue to give us life comes from the natural spring waters found in these mountains, the water gives life to plants and animals, and from these elements we are blessed with food and medicine; and

**WHEREAS**, this region is populated by traditional cultural places, archaeological (pre-historic, ancestral) and historical sites, minerals, plants, animals and other living things whose health and well-being are necessary for Indian health and well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, privately owned companies plan to mine the Oak Flat and Apache Leap area, leaving Oak Flat in danger of subsidence; and

**WHEREAS**, mining the area will break the relationships between tribes and all the elements of the natural world in this region, mining will offend our deities, resulting in their reluctance to answer our prayers and participate in our ceremonies, and causing sickness; a sickness that can not be remedied with Western medicine; and

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**WHEREAS**, harming this region will result in the diminishment of the power and effectiveness of tribal ceremonies, songs, prayers, and traditional life; and harming this region will add to physical and mental illnesses, and social problems that are so prominent in our Native American communities.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby support tribes in opposing any legislation that approves mining in these areas; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby respectfully urge the President of the United States, the United States Congress, along with Federal Agencies and the State of Arizona to take actions necessary to ensure that the concerns expressed by Indian Country, be given serious consideration over any entities proposing to mine and thereby, desecrate holy and sacred sites, such as Oak Flat and Apache Leap in Southeastern Arizona; and


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution; and until the United States Government and all its agencies act in a manner that is respectful to the quality of life and existence of tribal communities.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2009 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at Conference Center Niagara Falls in Niagara Falls, New York on June 14-17, 2009, with a quorum present.

  
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President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Recording Secretary