

**Statement from Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords  
to the  
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Association Public Meeting  
September 7, 2007**

**Withdrawal of land to stop the Augusta/Rosemont mine**

Dear Friends,

I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person this evening. I am grateful to all of you for coming out to discuss the critical issue of mining in our community. I have asked my District Director, Ron Barber, to share my remarks with you tonight.

I know that many of you are here because you are motivated by concerns about the Augusta Resource Corporation's proposal to mine the Rosemont property in the Santa Rita Mountains.

I am not opposed to all mining but I am opposed to this one.

Hard rock mines provide essential minerals that are incorporated into many of the goods we rely on in modern life, including our vehicles, our electronics, and our computers. Copper is a critical component of solar panels, which can produce energy that does not use water and is positive for the environment. In addition to these essential products, mining can also provide good jobs and economic growth for a community.

In Southern Arizona we also know very well that mines have created negative impacts and these issues must be taken into consideration when any mine is proposed. I have spoken with many of you personally and you have shared your serious concerns about the proposed Rosemont mine. I have heard your concerns and I share them. They include:

- The transformation of thousands of acres of National Forest lands in the beautiful Santa Rita Mountains into a waste disposal site, causing irreparable damage to wildlife habitat and a popular recreation area.
- The creation of an enormous new demand for precious groundwater at a time when the local water table is already declining precipitously and with no binding assurances that this new demand for water will be effectively offset.
- The possibility of significant pollution, including groundwater pollution, air pollution from blowing tailings, noise pollution from round-the-clock operations, and increased traffic hazards from fully loaded trucks traveling the roads day and night.

For all these reasons and more, this project has generated deep opposition from the local community. The simple fact is that the Rosemont mine presents too many problems and issues to be allowed to proceed. Consequently, I oppose the Rosemont mine.

As your Representative in Congress I am taking the following actions:

1. I will be sending a letter to the United States Forest Service (USFS) next week to request that it delay the decision on whether to accept the Plan of Operations submitted by the Augusta Resource Corporation. I will also request that the USFS take this additional time to study the very high potential for air, surface and groundwater contamination resulting from mining operations.
2. I will co-sponsor legislation in collaboration with my colleague Congressman Raul Grijalva to withdraw land from mining use by the Augusta Resource Corporation at the Rosemont property.

I have said it before and I say it here again tonight, the Santa Rita Mountains are a national treasure and they should be preserved for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Mining has been an important part of our heritage in southern Arizona and we cannot completely turn our back on it. At the same time, however, our communities are growing, our economy is changing and our priorities are shifting. The time is long past when we can automatically say that mining is the best use of our precious land and natural resources. I believe that the environmental and community concerns with the Rosemont mine far outweigh the potential economic gains.

I look forward to working with all of you to preserve this beautiful land now and for our posterity.

Sincerely Yours,

Gabrielle Giffords  
Member of Congress