The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Tracy Stone-Manning  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
760 Horizon Drive  
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Dec. 1, 2021

Dear Secretary Haaland and Director Stone-Manning,

We are writing in support of a recently submitted petition requesting a rulemaking effort concerning hardrock mining. Western Leaders Network is a nonpartisan nonprofit of more than 450 tribal and local elected officials across the Interior West. As local and tribal officials, we live in and represent communities that have endured a legacy of hardrock mining and the pollution and financial burdens that come with it. The 1872 Mining Law, which has not been meaningfully updated in its 149 years of existence, is an archaic remnant of our country’s settler-colonial founding and should be reformed immediately. However, redoing the rules that govern hardrock mining on federal lands is an important first step that will have tangible benefits for Indigenous and local western communities affected by mining.

This petition, brought forth by mining-affected communities and allied environmental organizations, asks the Bureau of Land Management to rewrite 43 C.F.R. §§ 3800 et seq, which implements the 1872 Mining Law. Specifically, the petition asks the BLM to clarify their responsibility to deny mine proposals that may cause unnecessary or undue degradation to treaty rights and other rights to fish, hunt, gather or otherwise use public land under the Federal Lands Management Policy Act (FLPMA). This adjustment will allow land managers to refuse mining on lands already being used or are relied upon by communities; currently land managers are unable to deny mines on the lands they steward.
Mining-affected communities and their local leaders have been working to reform the 1872 Mining Law for well over a century. Enacted one year after the U.S. government ceased making treaties with Indigenous peoples, the law was designed to encourage colonization and settlement of the western U.S. In addition to prioritizing mining over all other uses of federal lands, the 1872 Mining Law requires no royalties or reclamation fees, no bonding requirements, and no cleanup. That means tribes and communities like ours are on the hook - instead of the companies responsible - to reclaim polluting mines and handle the economic fallout.

Hardrock mining pollution is a regrettable part of western history that continues to burden communities today, from the Bingham Canyon Mine in Utah, to Butte, Montana’s Berkeley Pit and the infamous 2015 Gold King Mine spill in Colorado, which made national headlines. Still, Congress has not reformed this outdated law, which allows the mining industry to operate unchecked and cause damage to our lands and watersheds, cultural sites and local economies.

Without accountability and regulation for the mining industry, the responsibility falls on our communities to foot the bill for cleanup and reclamation.

Reforming the 1872 Mining Law should be a priority for every member of Congress, but until it can be updated, the Biden administration should step up and reform BLM’s hardrock mining rules. Mining in this country operates in a deeply inequitable manner, and redoing these rules is the first of many steps in creating a more just future for our local and tribal communities that deal every day with the impacts of mine pollution.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to modernize these rules in the short-term and to reform the mining law in the future.

Sincerely,

**Arizona**
- Adam Shimoni
  Flagstaff City Councilor
- Damon Clarke
  Hualapai Tribal Council Chairman
- Shelton Scott Crozier
  Hualapai Tribal Council Vice Chairman

**San Xavier District Councilor**
- Philbert Bailey
- Austin Nunez
- Phyllis Valenzuela

**Tohono O’odham Nation**
**Colorado**
Eva Henry
Adams County Commissioner

Emma Pinter
Adams County Commissioner

Rachael Richards
Aspen City Councilor

Juan Marcano
Aurora City Councilor

Matt Jones
Boulder County Commissioner

Sam Weaver
Boulder Mayor

George Marlin
Clear Creek County Commissioner

Randy Wheelock
Clear Creek County Commissioner

Rachel Medina
Cortez Mayor Pro Tem

Jessika Buell
Durango City Councilor

Sheila Wheeler
Dolores Town Trustee

Dave Munk
Holy Cross Energy Board of Directors
Chairman

Jonathan Godes
Glenwood Springs Mayor

Shelley Kaup
Glenwood Springs City Councilor

Marsha Porter-Norton
La Plata County Commissioner

Kristin Stephens
Larimer County Commissioner

Polly Christensen
Longmont City Councilor

Janice Bryan
Mancos Town Trustee

Patrick Berry
Mountain Village Town Councilor

Kristopher Larsen
Nederland Mayor

Steve Child
Pitkin County Commissioner

Greg Poschman
Pitkin County Commissioner

John Clark
Ridgway Mayor

Tim Corrigan
Routt County Commissioner

Thomas McCracken
Saguache County Commissioner

Hilary Cooper
San Miguel County Commissioner

Kris Holstrom
San Miguel County Commissioner
Lance Waring  
San Miguel County Commissioner

Elisabeth Lawrence  
Summit County Commissioner

Todd Brown  
Telluride Mayor Pro Tem

Kim Langmaid  
Vail Mayor Pro Tem

**Idaho**
Ladd Edmo  
Fort Hall Business Councilor
Shoshone Bannock Tribes

Shelby Rognstad  
Sandpoint Mayor

Cindy Riegel  
Teton County Commissioner

**Montana**
Juanita Vero  
Missoula County Commissioner

**Nevada**
Daniel Corona  
West Wendover Mayor

**New Mexico**
Andrea Romero  
State House Representative, District 46

Rosalyn Fry  
Aztec City Commissioner

Mark Lewis  
Aztec City Commissioner

**Utah**
Jacques Hadler  
Grand County Commissioner

Sarah Stock  
Grand County Commissioner

Rani Derasary  
Moab City Councilor

Kalen Jones  
Moab City Councilor
Glenn Wright
Summit County Council Chairman

**Wyoming**
Pete Gosar
Albany County Commissioner

Joyce Evans
Fort Laramie Mayor