

HUALAPAI TRIBAL COUNCIL
RESOLUTION NO. 24-2021
OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE
HUALAPAI TRIBE OF THE HUALAPAI INDIAN RESERVATION

(Hualapai Tribe Objection to the Sandy Valley Lithium Project)

WHEREAS, the Hualapai Indian Tribe is a federally recognized Indian Tribe located on the Hualapai Indian Reservation in northwestern Arizona with authority vested in the Hualapai Tribal Council by the Constitution approved March 31, 1991; and

WHEREAS, the Hualapai Tribe acknowledges and holds sacred a vast cultural landscape in northwestern Arizona that encompasses the area surrounding Wikieup, Arizona, including ancestral archaeological sites and other traditional cultural places, as well as plant, wildlife, and water resources; and

WHEREAS, the Hualapai Tribe owns 360 acres of land encompassing Cholla Canyon Ranch, within which Ha’Kamwe’ (Cofer Hot Springs) is located; and

WHEREAS, Cofer Hot Springs was determined by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be a Traditional Cultural Property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a result of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Supplemental Analysis for the Big Sandy Energy Project (cancelled) in 2001-2002; and

WHEREAS, an Australian mining company, Hawkstone Mining Limited, dba Big Sandy, Inc ., has conducted exploratory drilling for lithium clays on BLM land immediately adjacent to Hualapai land (Cholla Canyon Ranch) in 2018-2019, permitted by the BLM; and

WHEREAS, Hawkstone has applied for additional, more expansive, exploration (referred to as the Sandy Valley Lithium Project) on mining claims located on BLM land immediately adjacent Hualapai land, which would create surface and subsurface disturbances resulting from a proposed 145 drill pads, a bulk sample site, heavy equipment access roads to drill pads totaling approximately 12.5 miles, potential development of an existing inactive water well, and other associated facilities; and

WHEREAS, the current proposed action requires NEPA analysis and review, for which a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and was released on April 12, 2021, with comments requested by May 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, a number of serious deficiencies exist, including disregard for several sensitive resource categories that were analyzed insufficiently or not all, including Cultural Resources, Environmental Justice, Native American Religious Concerns/ Traditional Values, Visual Resources, Water Resources, and Water Quality; and

WHEREAS, the Hualapai Tribe requested Cooperating Agency status in response to a request for tribal consultation by the BLM regarding the preparation of the EA for the proposed action, including an initial request from the Hualapai Tribe submitted July 2, 2020, and an additional follow up request on November 2, 2020 when we did not receive a response to our earlier submittal. Our request for Cooperating Agency status was based on our ability to provide expertise and specialized knowledge that could have contributed to the draft EA, but was denied by the BLM in a letter dated November 10, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Ha’Kamwe’ (Cofer Hot Springs) and the surrounding cultural landscape in which it is located are considered ancestral to the Hualapai people and continue to be revered as patrimony and integral to the identity of the Hualapai people; and

WHEREAS, should any further destruction or disturbance be permitted by the BLM, this cultural landscape and the fragile desert resources within it will be irreparably harmed; and

WHEREAS, should any further destruction or disturbance be approved, including the proposed action or future mining activity as described in the April 22, 2021, presentation made by Hawkstone Mining, Ltd. to tribal council, the Tribe’s ability to operate Cholla Canyon Ranch for beneficial purposes, including ceremonial purposes, or for economic pursuits such as horticulture for tribal use or recreation such as secular activities will be irreparably harmed; and


WHEREAS, the permitting of extractive mining activities adjacent to Hualapai land (Cholla Canyon Ranch), including exploration that would lead to full-scale open-pit mining, would constitute a serious abrogation of Federal Trust obligations by the BLM, as well as an affront to tribal sovereignty.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Hualapai Tribal Council strongly objects to any further permitting of surface or subsurface disturbances within the Sandy Valley Lithium mining claim area, which will result in devastating impacts to significant cultural and spiritual resources; will threaten long term tribal water rights and quality; will cause irreparable harm to the Tribe’s ability to continue cultural activities and to pursue economic development of Cholla Canyon Ranch, and will result in long term ecological destruction of a fragile desert environment, including plant and animal species with cultural significance. Further, should an open pit mine ever be permitted, it would create enormous public health issues caused by pollution, dust, noise, and overall safety concerns caused by having such a mine immediately adjacent to Hualapai land, as well as severe visual impacts.

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, the undersigned as Vice-Chairman of the Hualapai Tribal Council, hereby certify that the Hualapai Tribal Council of the Hualapai Tribe is composed of nine (9) members of whom **eight (8)** constituting a quorum were present at a **Special Council Meeting** held this **22nd day of April, 2021**; and that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by a vote of **(7) approve, (0) opposed, (2) excused**; pursuant to authority of Article V, Section (a) of the Constitution of the Hualapai Tribe approved March 13, 1991.

ATTEST:


Shanna Salazar, Admin Assistant
Hualapai Tribal Council


Shelton Scott Crozier, Vice Chairman
Hualapai Tribal Council