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January 28, 2016

Mr. Michael L. Connor
Deputy Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Connor,

We are writing to request your assistance in working with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) to facilitate a final administrative determination, at the earliest opportunity, regarding the August 28, 2015 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Decision relative to contracts CA-20139 and CA-22901.

As you are aware, on August 28, 2015, then-California State Director James Kenna issued a Decision formally terminating the two sand and gravel mining contracts between the BLM and CEMEX. This action followed a series of written communications between BLM and CEMEX initiated by BLM on March 13, 2015. The history of this sand and gravel mining issue in Santa Clarita, California dates back over a quarter century to the original contract issuance on March 9, 1990.

We understand that CEMEX has exercised their right to appeal and to seek a stay of the Decision. While we recognize that the IBLA employs a very deliberative process that can typically take in excess of two years before a final decision is rendered, we believe it is in the interest of all parties to secure a determination at the earliest opportunity. To be clear, while we are respectfully requesting a final administrative determination to be rendered by the IBLA, we do not believe that artificially compressing any timelines or in any way abridging CEMEX's rights, or those of BLM, in the administrative process is appropriate. For example, there are concerns related to processes leading up to the issuance of the August Decision–which the Department may wish to revisit to ensure that all administrative procedures are on a sound foundation.

As you know first-hand from your personal involvement with this issue, the threat of a large scale sand and gravel mine has impacted the Santa Clarita community for over 25 years. During that time frame, the community's population has almost doubled. A once rural location is now adjacent to the third most populous city in Los Angeles County. Additionally, over the last eight years, a number of studies conducted by or participated in by the National Park Service, BLM and United States Forest Service recognize the significant ecological natural resources of the Upper Santa Clara River area, where the proposed mine is anticipated to be located. Finally, on October 14, 2014, President Obama designated the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and that property directly touches the proposed mining site.

With the significant changes in the area over the past quarter century, a large scale mine at that location is clearly no longer appropriate. Furthermore, what appears to be a breach of the contract terms forms the basis for the cancellation of the contracts. An early resolution of this issue will bring a long-term dispute to a well-deserved conclusion.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with all of the parties to bring this issue to resolution.

Sincerely,

Steve Knight
Member of Congress

Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress