

CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE URGES INTERIOR SECRETARY  
NORTON TO REINSTATE DENIAL OF GLAMIS MINE AT INDIAN PASS,  
IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

Ft. Yuma, California, Tuesday April 16, 2002.

The Attorney General of the State of California has reviewed Interior Secretary Gale Norton's decision to rescind the 2001 Record of Decision for the proposed Imperial Project Gold Mine and the Solicitor's Opinion upon which it was based. Pursuant to its independent power and duty to protect the natural resources of the State from pollution, impairment, or destruction in furtherance of the public interest, it has sent a letter critical of that decision to Secretary Norton.

The letter details the legal flaws in the Solicitor's Opinion, concluding that it "misconstrues [the Federal Land Policy and Management Act] and ignores the Department's duties and responsibilities under Executive Order 13007 and Executive Order 12898. The Department of the Interior possesses the power, and indeed the obligation, to implement the mandate of [FLPMA], by ensuring that the scenic, scientific, and environmental values of the [California Desert Conservation Area's] lands are not unduly impaired. Existing regulations allow DOI to accomplish that goal; even if DOI believes that the regulations should be more, DOI nonetheless has the legal obligation to protect those values."

The Office concludes that, "the decision not to approve the plan of operations was a correct one. We urge [Secretary Norton] to reinstate this decision."

Mike Jackson, Sr., President of the Quechan Tribal Council concurs that, "The Interior Department appears to be saying that it must approve this mine even where there is undisputed evidence that the mine would cause undue impairment of Indian sacred lands." He added that, "The Quechan Nation will continue to fight for its religion, traditions and history."

Courtney Ann Coyle, attorney for the Quechan Tribe stated, "We are pleased that the Attorney General's office sees the law in a very similar way to how the Tribe sees the law. We too ask Interior to reinstate the denial of the mine notwithstanding the administration's jailbreak on mining and tribal issues. The decision on the permit stands on its own."

For additional information, or copies of the letter, please contact by phone:

For Tribe: Mike Jackson, Sr., President Quechan Tribal Council 760.572.0213 Courtney Ann Coyle, Attorney Quechan Indian Tribe 858.454.8687

For California Attorney General's Office: Sean B. Hecht, Deputy Attorney General,  
213.897.0628

To express your concern, please fax: Hon. George W. Bush, United States President,  
FAX: 202.456.2461 Gale Norton, Interior Secretary, FAX: 202.208.6950 Neal McCaleb,  
Assistant Interior Secretary, Indian Affairs, FAX: 202.208.6334