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Public Lands, Forests and Mining Subcommittee  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
U.S. Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club supports S.771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act. This important piece of legislation will help to protect air and water quality, as well as wildlife near the city of Santa Clarita and on adjacent public lands.

This legislation would cancel the BLM contracts with Cemex that would have allowed mining of 56 million tons of sand and gravel close to the homes and schools of Santa Clarita. This mine is opposed by the City of Santa Clarita, as well as most businesses, individuals, environmental groups and elected officials in the area. Concerns include immitigable impacts on air quality from blasting, aggregate crushing and truck trips. The projected truck trips of over 1000/day would impact local roads as well as freeways, including the junction of I-5/I-14 at Newhall Pass, a major north south commuter and commercial route. The proposed mine is adjacent to the Santa Clara River, one of the last wild rivers of California, home of protected and endangered species, raising the issue of possible water contamination. The proposed mine site is next to Soledad Canyon, a SEA identified by the National Park Service as containing some of the best remaining tracts of big-cone Douglass fir and canyon oak forests, as well as riparian forest and woodland, coastal sage scrub and alluvial fan sage scrub. This area is also in the path of the proposed connection of the two parts of the Angeles Forest, in an important wildlife corridor, and in sight of the Pacific Crest Trail and the new Crest to Coast Trail. Additionally, the mine would use over 700 acre feet/year of groundwater upstream of already drought impacted rural homes that depend on groundwater.

We support speedy passage of S.771, and supporting legislation through the House of Representatives.

Sandra Cattell,  
Santa Clarita Group of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter

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