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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 4, 2012

The Honorable Tom Tidwell
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Yates Building, 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Tidwell:

I write to raise concern regarding the Forest Service permit process and the City of Tombstone's plans to to fully repair the springs and waterlines that comprise the Tombstone Aqueduct.

It is my understanding that, in accordance with a 1962 Forest Service special use permit, the City of Tombstone is authorized to maintain Miller, Gardner, Carr, Rock, and Clark Springs and the waterlines they feed within the Miller Wilderness on the Coronado National Forest. According to the City of Tombstone, the aqueduct has accounted for between 50 and 80 percent of the city's water supply in recent years and is critical to the health, safety, and economy of its more than 1,500 residents.

As you know, the Tombstone Aqueduct was damaged by flooding in the wake of the June 2011 Monument Fire. Without its primary water source, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer declared a State of Emergency for Tombstone and allocated funds for emergency repairs to the aqueduct in August 2011. As I understand it, the City of Tombstone began working with the Forest Service to acquire permits to begin to restore the springs and the aqueduct in August 2011.

Concerns have been raised regarding the limited progress of the project and delays stemming from the Forest Service permitting process. Given the importance of the aqueduct to the city and its residents, I respectfully urge the Forest Service to work cooperatively with the City of Tombstone to ensure the necessary repairs are made expeditiously and in a cost effective manner.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, in accordance with existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff Flake".

JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress

cc: Corbin Newman, Jr., Southwestern Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service