From: Hillary Abe
To: FS-comments-southwestern-cibola
Subject: Re: Roca Honda Uranium Mine Proposal on Mt. Taylor
Date: Friday, April 26, 2013 12:24:53 PM

Dear Cibola National Forest Supervisor,

To: Forest Supervisor
Cibola National Forest and Grasslands
2113 Osuna Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

I am a concerned citizen of Arizona and a member of the greater Colorado Plateau community. As a community member, I am deeply concerned with the proposed development for a variety of reasons. The first and foremost is that we must protect our precious resources and the health of our communities. I believe that the proposed uranium mine and it's requisite processes will have long-term and vastly detrimental effects on the natural systems we as people of the region rely on. On top of the environmental and health impacts, Mt. Taylor is considered a sacred site by many Native and non-Native communities of the region. It is sacred for a reason - as a mountain, it's central role and function in the delicate ecosystem should not be disturbed. I implore you to accept and consider the following factors and reasons for why a uranium mine is not in the best interest of our greater community.

I respectfully submit the following comments on the Roca Honda Resources Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). I urge you to select Alternative 1, “No Action”, for the following reasons:

- Roca Honda will waste New Mexico’s water.

Roca Honda is proposing to pump and use millions of gallons of water a day to operate the mine. This water will be pumped from the underground aquifer that our communities will rely on in the future. Treated groundwater that could be used by the public in the future, will be given to a nearby private landowner.

- Mt. Taylor is a sacred site that needs to be protected.

Many people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, recognize the cultural value of Mt. Taylor. Mt Taylor is a place of great spiritual significance. It is central to oral history stories and ceremonies, and it plays a vital role in cosmology and religious practices. Shrines, pilgrimage trails, traditional medicines, and springs are all at risk of being destroyed by new mining. Mining on Mt Taylor jeopardizes the spiritual harmony and balance of our communities. Historical and cultural impacts need to be analyzed under the protection of the National Historic Preservation Act and NEPA.

- There is no repository for uranium waste.

The fact that there is nowhere to take and store the waste is a critical problem. It is irresponsible and dangerous to begin mining when there is no answer for waste disposal.

- Radioactive waste and by-products would be transported through our communities. Roca Honda would transport radioactive and hazardous materials through our communities. Local law enforcement and public health entities are not prepared to handle accidents during transport. Communities would bear the brunt of responding to emergency situations and living with the aftermath. The DEIS does not identify a mill site, the transportation route, or communities along the way.

- Cumulative impacts to nearby communities are not being considered.

State and federal agencies are not taking into account other nearby mining projects and the cumulative impacts these mines would have on our health, water and other natural resources. The section on cumulative impacts lists other projects in the Grants Mining District, but doesn't provide a map showing their location or what communities will be impacted.

- Impacts to people’s health haven’t been adequately studied.

Communities in northwestern NM are living with the contamination of the past. Families living nearby abandoned uranium mines and mills notice increased rates of cancers and other health problems. This

problem has been ignored by state and federal agencies. To proceed with more mines without knowing the scope of impact to people's health is dangerous and deadly.

- Water and a healthy community are human rights.

The federal government and the state of New Mexico need to recognize the rights of people who are living in uranium impacted communities and say "NO" to the proposed Roca Honda mine.

- Uranium contamination from past mining projects remains unremediated.

New Mexico is home to hundreds of abandoned uranium mines, with thousands more on the Navajo Nation. These mines leak contaminants into groundwater, release radon into the air, and contribute to health problems of residents living in contaminated communities.

- Former mine workers suffer devastating health impacts from working in uranium mines.

Thousands of mine and mill workers have suffered and continue to suffer and die from working in hazardous conditions. While there have been some improvements in worker safety, there will always be risks associated with working in mines. Our communities deserve jobs without the risk.

These are just a few ways this mine will negatively impact our greater community. Thank you for considering my comments and I look forward to reviewing the final plan.

Sincerely,
Hillary Abe

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