

Dear Forest Service,

I am a resident of Patagonia and the impact that mining has on my quality of life is tremendous.

This summer while I was biking on my usual scenic route of Harshaw Road, I had mine trucks behind me blowing on their horn while I was trying to navigate cows on both sides of the road. This area is open range and the constant flow of traffic on this rural route not only ruins a peaceful bike ride but is dangerous for the domestic and wild animals that cross it. Besides horses and cows I passed dead rattle snakes, skunks, and javelina. As someone who has come to Patagonia for the scenic beauty, star filled skies at night and peaceful and quiet environment, mining.

Water is another issue that is adversely effected by mining. Not only is water the source of life especially in the desert, it is also is the source for growing food and livestock. Many mines from the turn of the century continue to pollute our water sources as evidenced in the national press of the stream from the lead queen mine turning day glow orange after heavy rains. There has not been adequate studies to determine how the dumping of tailings and mining contaminate our wells and water supply. There is talk of how the cattle will not drink water from certain wells because of contamination and how mining companies have offered to run water lines for ranches so they will not have to use the contaminated water below their sites. What about the rest of us?

There are many people like me that have come to Patagonia for it's outstanding beauty. We have invested our life savings into homes that have appreciated. Mining in the area will have an adverse effect on the value of our homes and we will be left in our retiring years with huge reductions of our assets and homes we may not be able to give away. This is unfair while foreign mining interests walk away with billions of dollars.

Lastly people mostly talk about jobs being created. What type of jobs are these? The country is changing and today you need different skills and education to compete in this world economy. Many experts agree manufacturing jobs are not coming back. The mines give local people jobs that will require no education or training and will be gone when they stop their operation. Not only will the mining jobs last a short time, by the end of their time here many of the other jobs based on Eco-tourism will be gone too. This is extremely short sighted and will help to keep people in a cycle of poverty. When people like me start leaving because of the pollution, and loss of wildlife and the very quality of life we came to enjoy in our senior years, there will be a major loss of jobs and revenue to the town. These jobs will only grow if the qualities of Patagonia were protected.

I hope the forest service will act in a manner that reflects their name, protecting our most valuable resources for future generations.

Thank you.

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