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The comment period for the proposed Plan of Operation for the Hermosa-Taylor Drilling Project should be extended for at least an additional 30 days. While I understand that a shorter timeframe is typically allotted for comment for scoping activities, the US Forest Service, as well as all agencies, should provide adequate time to identify potential issues.

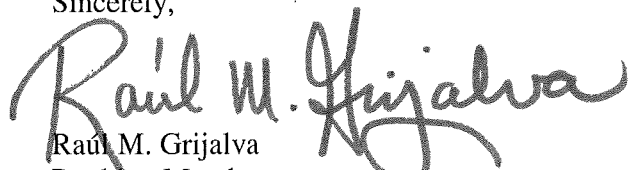
A minimum 30 day extension will meet my expectations of full public involvement and a demonstrated commitment to ensuring a comprehensive approach to managing extractive projects. The intention of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) was to ensure that this approach was continually used and provided an opportunity for all parties affected to have a voice in the process.

An extension is especially important when considering that the progression of this individual project has the potential to adversely affect the unique and sensitive environment around the Santa Rita and Patagonia Mountains including watersheds on our public lands. Home to a number of threatened and endangered species as well as extremely rare environments such as the sky islands in the Coronado National Forest, adding an additional mine to the numerous other projects already affecting the landscape raises great concern.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully request that the US Forest Service to consider not only the potential impacts of this individual project, but of the possible cumulative effects that the combined numerous projects in the region are having and could have on our natural resources.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Brandon Bragato on the Natural Resources Committee Democratic Staff at (202) 225-6065 or [Brandon.Bragato@mail.house.gov](mailto:Brandon.Bragato@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources