**Kore Mining Long Valley Exploration & Heap Leach Mining Proposal 5/12/21**

These comments pertain to Long Valley Drilling Exploration Project #59294.

Since the proposed exploration precedes the ultimate intent of Kore Mining to perform Heap Leach Mining for Gold, it is appropriate to examine the ultimate intent while considering the drilling exploration.

The Kore Mining Claim is 1848 acres on Public Land (BLM). Previous claim owners have drilled 824 exploratory borings in the 1980s & 1990s, yet no mining has resulted. The low expected yield & price of gold at that time made mining not financially viable. The current price of gold $1,841/oz has apparently changed the economics of mining this claim. An important factor driving the currently estimated financial viability is the proposed method, Heap Leach Mining, which uses cyanide solution, lead nitrate & zinc to remove the gold from crushed ore. The toxic nature of this mining method requires containment & post-mining reclamation. The use of toxic cyanide presents environmental risks to exposed wildlife (death by poisoning), dispersal by wind & contamination of ground water if containment is breached. The Eastern Sierra is seismically active, with a magnitude 5.2 earthquake & aftershocks recorded in April 2020, a blink of an eye in geologic time. This seismic activity & existing faults running through the mining claim create concern about containment viability.

Given the low expected yield (0.019 oz/ton), a huge volume of excavation, 130 million tons of soil & rock to a depth of 200 ft or more, will be required in order to achieve the proposed financial goal. Kore Mining estimates recovery of gold amounting to 714,000 oz (22.3 tons). Contemplate those numbers: 130,000,000 tons excavated to yield 22.3 tons of gold!

Processing the ore, flushing with cyanide solution, dust control & post-mining reclamation will require considerable amounts of water. An estimated water supply requirement of 600 GPM is in the Economic Assessment Technical Report (economic report) prepared by Kore Mining, but there is no estimate of total water quantity required for the mining operation. The report simply states the expectation that sufficient ground water exists for onsite development. What is the environmental impact of this expected ground water use? Note that Hot Creek, freshwater springs, geothermal hot springs, Owens River, Crowley Lake & Los Angeles Aqueduct are adjacent & downstream of this proposed mine. What is the potential effect of ground water draw-down from wells used for the mining operation?

There is little information presented regarding Native American Cultural Resources & no mention of engagement with local Tribes. The Draft Exploration Plan prepared by Kore Mining addresses this issue in general terms & references an archaeological study from 1998. The economic report prepared by Kore Mining does not address cultural resources.

Eastern Sierra communities depend upon tourism as their primary economy. There is concern that many aspects of this mine proposed by Kore Mining will negatively affect tourism, such as noise, dust, traffic & unsightly views of the mining complex. Kore Mining’s economic report estimates a heap height of 328 – 492 ft, which would be visible from a long distance away. Hot Creek Fly Fishing Ranch is within view of the proposed mine & provides lodging for fishermen plying the scenic blue-ribbon trout stream. The Hot Creek Geothermal Area is another popular tourist destination. The mine site is clearly visible from the canyon rim. A network of dirt roads in the vicinity provide off-road recreation, which will be disrupted by truck traffic serving the proposed mine. Regarding traffic, there is no mention of the small bridge crossing Hot Creek that will be used by mining traffic. What is the load rating of this bridge & what wear will result from 7 years of use by mining traffic?

There is little economic incentive for our Public Entities/Representatives to approve the drilling exploration or the proposed mining operation. BLM recovers processing cost & fees and does not receive royalties from the mining operation. The State of California receives royalties of $5/oz of gold up a maximum of $10,000 (a paltry sum) and there is a formula for tax on the mining revenue. It’s likely there will be some local economic revenue in Mono County during the 7 years of proposed operation & perhaps a few jobs for local residents for that duration, but these economic benefits pale in comparison to the potential long-term environment risks & harm that may result from the proposed mine. The sole intent of Kore Mining is to enrich themselves & their investors on our public land, then take their money & run!

It is our conclusion & opinion that the environmental concerns do not warrant a USFS determination of categorical exclusion for Long Valley Drilling Exploration Project #59294. Furthermore, we think the USFS should not permit the additional exploratory drilling proposed by Kore Mining in Long Valley Drilling Exploration Project #59294 because the exploratory drilling cannot be considered separately from the ultimate intent of Kore Mining to perform Heap Leach Mining for Gold at this site on public land. There has been considerable exploratory drilling in the past, so more drilling & the associated disturbance is not necessary. The proposed mine presents significant risks, concerns & potentially serious long-term harm to the area, with insignificant benefit to the public. This proposed project will only enrich Kore Mining.