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First name: Jill

Last name: Johnson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Person,

The purpose of this letter is to ask for analysis regarding Arizona Mineral's drilling at the Hermosa-Taylor site in the Patagonia Mountains.

My husband and I would like to introduce ourselves briefly before outlining our requests.

Retirees, we have owned our home in Patagonia since 2005. We have worked hard throughout our lives: Alex as a Certified Prosthetist, and I as an elementary school teacher and then as a worker at a hardwood flooring mill. We raised two kids in the countryside of western Massachusetts.

Nature, wilderness, and wild things have always been a profound part of our lives. In ways, it's our life's blood, to be out hiking, walking, observing nature, studying it, learning, assisting in counts and research projects, but mainly receiving daily nurturing from being in the wild. Our grown kids are committed to these values as well.

The Patagonia Mountains are at the center of our lives here. We, and many of our friends, find access to this area's beauty, quiet and (relatively) pristine qualities essential to our well being and our quality of life. IT IS WHY WE LIVE HERE. IT IS OUR SOURCE OF IDENTITY, AND RAISON D'ETRE and it is VITAL TO OUR WELL BEING.

Therefore our concerns come straight from our hearts as well as our thinking, and we respectfully request that you take into account our questions.

1. WATER. We have noticed the scarring and damage inflicted by previous mining efforts in the Patagonia's. The toxic water, the erosion, the loss of plant and animal life, the re-arrangement of the landscape, we have seen this damage and how long it takes nature to try to repair itself.

We know from our tainted water supply in town that the effects are long lasting indeed. Every week we drive to Nogales to purchase drinking water.

Not all the repairs to old mining sites are working. WE ASK FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ANALYSES OF THE ALREADY EXISTING DAMAGE TO OUR MUNICIPAL WATERSHED.

And this same scrutiny should apply to ANY FUTURE ACTIVITIES THAT COULD IMPACT OUR MUNICIPAL WATERSHED.

That includes the effects drilling and mining would have on:

All waterways.

The connectedness of previous tunnels and waterways with any future drilling/ road construction, tree removal, etc, ALL ASPECTS OF REVAMPING THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE in a highly sensitive area. WE REQUEST THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THESE ACTIONS BE STUDIED CAREFULLY BEFORE FURTHER ACTIVITY IS ALLOWED ON FOREST LAND.

We were also alarmed to read in the local paper that the mining company has purchased large quantities of

water from the town WHEN ONLY TWO YEARS AGO WE WERE TOLD THAT THE TOWN NEEDED TO CUT BACK ON ITS WATER USE. AGAIN: Further study and analysis is definitely needed.

## 2. SAFETY:

We have to time our walks and bike rides to avoid the loud and intense traffic on the roads when the shift changes, and vehicles zoom by, blasting the peace and forcing us to make room. What about children bicycling along these roads? And the elderly, and anyone for that matter? There are no sidewalks. Are pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists, young and old going to be required to surrender the right to use the local roads in order to be safe?

## 3. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH: my husband and I are part of a local and wider spread community of people studying the rich biodiversity in the Patagonia Mountains. WE SUGGEST THAT STUDYING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF ALL ASPECTS OF DRILLING AND MINING BE ANALYZED. That includes:

- Light pollution
- Sound pollution
- Traffic
- Cutting of trees
- Building of new roads
- Bulldozing and excavating habitats

We aren't staying STOP THIS. We are asking STUDY THIS IN ADVANCE.

As a side note, we would like to include a personal anecdote here:

During a recent Butterfly Census for the South Eastern Arizona Butterfly Association (SEABA) several of our surveyors were verbally threatened by Mining Security personnel while these citizens stood on the County roadside ( Harshaw Road) and tried to observe species for the Annual Count. They were shaken by the hostility shown to them while on a County Road, simply identifying and tabulating various species ( some of which are rare) of butterflies, a process they have engaged in for years.

Yellow Billed Cuckoo: we know that Tucson Audubon has received a grant for planting walnut trees in the Patagonia mountains to maintain a viable habitat for these birds. Clearly this is a sensitive area that should not be further degraded.

## 4. DEGRADATION OF SCENIC RESOURCE

With the drilling rigs, new roads, noise pollution and destruction of forest, this once scenic area is already compromised. ANALYSIS OF INCREASED SCOPE OF MINING IMPACT SHOULD BE MANDATED in order to ensure that the ecological health and scenic properties of this precious resource are not further impacted negatively. In short, we request a full and in-depth, impartial ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT for this area.

We request ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT. How will destruction of habitat, alteration of roads, noise, and sound pollution, etc, affect the influx of scientists, hunters, recreational visitors, hikers, bicyclists, nature lovers who have used these mountains for decades in a low impact fashion? These people will no longer come to an area where full scale mining takes place, thereby SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

The proposed drill pads cover a long East/West stretch across the mountains, creating a BARRIER FOR MIGRATION OF CHARISMATIC ANIMALS, who use the mountains to travel. ANALYSIS OF THIS POTENTIAL

HINDRANCE SHOULD BE MADE.

Sincerely,  
Jill Johnson