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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sierra Vista Ranger District

District Ranger, c/o Rick Goshen

4070 S. Avenida Saracino

Hereford, AZ 85615

Dear Ranger Goshen,

I write to you as a resident of Patagonia, Arizona who is concerned about the San Antonio drilling project in the nearby Patagonia Mountains proposed by the Canadian mining company by the name of Barksdale. Currently the Forest Service is granting the mining project a Categorical Exclusion, which by definition assumes no environmental impact whatsoever. I urge you to consider many issues before drilling is allowed to commence, therefore designating this 651 acre mountain land worthy of an Environmental Assessment.

My reasons for advocating more study are many, as just a superficial reading of Barksdale's Plan of Operation leaves out several concerns for residents of my area. (1) The road proposed to be used by Barksdale miners is the same road used by ranchers, recreationalists and the Border Patrol. The road is too narrow and sinuous for this type of additional truck traffic, it will compromise the safety of those living in the area. (2) The total water usage for the five drill holes (which Barksdale has not specified) certainly compromises the residents who depend on private wells for their existence, as this may draw down the water table for a large area, not just the immediate area around the five drilling sites.

I have been a property owner in Patagonia since nineteen eighty six, and am currently fully retired here.

(3) The pristine environment and bio-diversity is of paramount importance to me, and is the reason I chose Patagonia as my home. There are several endangered plants and animals in these mountains, and the impact of this operation should be studied carefully before granting carte blanche to the Canadians. The Yellow Billed Cuckoo and the Sonoran Tiger Salamander are just two examples that come to mind: their existence would likely be impacted by drilling. Once these species are lost they are gone forever, please treat this issue seriously and take the time to make an Environmental Assessment. The Forest Service's motto is CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE.