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Comments: I strongly oppose the Long Valley Exploration Drilling Project proposed by Kore USA Ltd. (Kore Mining). The proposed mining project threatens the future of the scenic, economic and ecological importance of the Long Valley area in Mono County.

I am particularly concerned about the project's proximity to Hot Creek, one of California's most unique wildlife and fish habitats. Though this project is only exploratory for now, I have observed the dramatic impacts mining can have on fish and freshwater ecosystems. Mining operations can lead to contamination when rainwater or surface drainage carries toxic byproducts to nearby streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater, thereby harming species that rely on these water sources. Not only is this proposed project exceptionally close to Hot Creek, but the water from Hot Creek eventually flows into Owens River and Crowley Lake, putting this entire ecosystem at risk.

Right now, the need to restore ecosystems rather than degrade them is urgent. California is entering into another extreme drought, another extreme fire season, and is aiming to protect 30% of our lands by 2030. As such, it is completely inappropriate to approve projects like this that will only cause further risk to our natural resources. Therefore, I strongly oppose even the first exploratory step of an effort to ultimately mine for gold. At a minimum, a full EIS should be conducted in order to properly assess the full impacts and allow for meaningful public engagement.