Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/15/2026 12:27:23 PM
First name: Kendra
Last name: Phillips
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Roca Honda Mine Project. I am submitting the following issues that I believe warrant thorough, independent analysis before any decision is made.

1. Water resources
The Grants Mineral Belt has a documented history of groundwater and surface water contamination from uranium mining and milling, including ongoing impacts to the San Mateo Creek Basin and the Puerco River. I request that the EIS include:
*A detailed hydrological study of any aquifers the mine could intersect or dewater, and of downstream surface water bodies
*Baseline and projected water quality data for uranium, radium, and associated heavy metals
*An analysis of long-term (post-closure) monitoring and who will be responsible for it if the operator ceases operations or becomes insolvent

2. Wildlife and habitat
Mount Taylor and the surrounding Mesa lands support mule deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, and other regionally significant wildlife. I request that the EIS evaluate:
*Direct habitat disturbance and fragmentation from surface infrastructure, roads, and waste rock storage over the life of the mine
*Risks to wildlife from tailings ponds, waste rock piles, and any water impoundments, including risk to migratory birds
*Cumulative impacts when considered alongside other proposed uranium projects in the region (e.g., La Jara Mesa), rather than assessing this mine in isolation
*Post-closure reclamation standards and timelines for restoring habitat function, not just surface stability

3. Cultural and tribal resources
Mount Taylor is a Traditional Cultural Property of significance to the Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, Hopi Tribe, and Zuni Pueblo. I request that the EIS include:
*Full Section 106 consultation with all affiliated tribes, documented transparently in the EIS
*An assessment of impacts to traditional and religious use of the area
*Consideration of the disproportionate historical burden uranium mining has placed on Indigenous communities in this region, and how this project avoids repeating that pattern

4. Transportation and public health
Ore and waste transport routes should be clearly identified and evaluated for:
*Proximity to residential communities, schools, and water sources along the route
*Radiological monitoring protocols during transport
*Emergency response planning for spills

5. Reclamation and long-term liability
Given the region's history of abandoned and incompletely reclaimed uranium sites, I request that the EIS specify:
*Bonding and financial assurance requirements sufficient to cover full reclamation and long-term monitoring
*A concrete reclamation timeline and success criteria
*Contingency plans if the operator cannot complete reclamation

I appreciate the Forest Service's commitment to a transparent, science-based NEPA process, and I ask that

these issues be fully addressed in the Draft EIS. Thank you for considering these comments.