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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My extended family has hiked and camped in the Cibola National Forests since the 1980s, starting near Magdalena, Datil, and Mount Taylor. The Mount Taylor area is where we return most, but the whole region is spectacular to explore. My 3 sons share that love of the natural beauty there, and I want them to inherit a forest that has not been further diminished. This project, as described, raises questions the agency has not answered, and I am opposed to it proceeding until it does.

The most basic problem is that the public cannot plan meaningful participation because the agency has published no schedule. The Expected Analysis Type is an Environmental Impact Statement, yet in the Project Milestones table the fields read only "Milestone Date NEPA Start Date Finding/Decision Date" with nothing filled in. Affected communities, tribal governments, and my own extended family who recreate in this forest cannot arrange participation around blank fields. The agency must publish firm milestone dates for scoping, draft review, and the final decision before this process moves forward.

The description of what is actually being proposed is equally thin. The Project Overview states that this is a "Proposal submitted by Roca Honda Resources LLC on and near Jesus Mesa to conduct developmental drilling, develop infrastructure and construct access roads on NFS lands." That sentence is the full extent of the project description available to the public. There is no acreage, no disturbance footprint, no drilling depth or volume, and no explanation of what the infrastructure consists of. I want to know what resources in the Mount Taylor area are at risk, including what water resources will be affected. This region is already dry, and my concern is that water mining to facilitate this operation will contribute to decline the area has already experienced from prior uranium mining and climate change. The agency must release a detailed project description before the scoping comment period closes, and I expect a direct response to that demand.

I also want the agency to weigh the full scope of the connected action, not only the surface disturbance on National Forest lands. The Project Overview itself acknowledges that "These activities will support the underground uranium mine and water treatment plant proposed on adjacent state and private lands." The EIS is being led by the Cibola National Forest, yet the mine and treatment plant sit off NFS land. The notice does not identify which federal, state, or tribal agencies will serve as cooperating agencies, and it does not explain how impacts from the mine itself will be analyzed. The agency should disclose the complete list of cooperating agencies and confirm that the EIS scope covers the entire connected action.

Finally, I want the agency to explain why a Canadian company is applying for these mining operations rather than a domestic one, and I want a genuine cost-benefit analysis that accounts for what uranium mining does to this dry region. My tax dollars fund the Forest Service, and responsible management of Cibola National Forest means maintaining the sustainability of these lands, not simply permitting extraction. The agency should state on the record how it will weigh those costs and benefits before any decision is made.