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Dear District Ranger,

I am disturbed by the potential for a mine to be built at the headwaters of the Bitterroot. I live in this valley and have a well and no hope to be served by public water due to location.

I've seen what happens when mining and industry dirty water. It often starts with illness and cancer if the contamination can't be seen or smelled. This has happened all around the country. In North Carolina, there have been isolated incidences

of rare cancers in places like Wilmington and Huntersville where water became contaminated.

In some cases, the issues are obvious like in West Virginia where once pristine water is brown and smells of sulphur.

The problem is this may never happen. But if it does, these companies do not mitigate the damage or they mitigate over decades.

They often can't afford to. How do you clean up ground water and a river that gets contaminated? Generally it's time.

Personally, I don't want to go to a central location to get cases of free bottled water. And how do I care for my gardens and horses with 12 ounce bottles of water? But that's how families live in West Virginia where a mine destroyed their water

and wells.

This doesn't provide a lot of jobs for our community. Mining is now specialized work. It's not something a kid with a high school diploma can go do.

What happened in West Virginia? A lot of unemployment and because of the environmental issues, it's a beautiful place where no one wants to live or travel. So those communities became essentially dependent on public assistance.

To allow to this to go forward is to risk the Bitterroot's future for next to no benefit to the community. That handful of jobs could be made up for with a new housing development, a new manufacturer like a Montana Knife or even just a restoring

of forest service staffing.

If that mine has an issue, there is no future for this valley.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maggie Collister

[REDACTED ADDRESS]

Stevensville Montana