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First name: Tilly

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

I strongly oppose the proposed Roca Honda underground uranium mining project by Energy Fuels Resources. The project threatens regional water, community health, and cultural sites.

The mine will use millions of gallons of water and risks permanent contamination of vital underground aquifers that feed regional drinking supplies. Water is life and we cannot risk our precious water for energy fuels resources. It will create threats to our precious and sacred water resources. Discharging mine-affected water risks contaminating local groundwater and hydrological systems. Not to mention, numerous uranium sites still need to be clean in New Mexico. This should be the focus and priority of New Mexico, rather than letting Energy Fuels Resources harm our lands. They are a threat to the community of Mt. Taylor and surrounding areas.

Contamination could lead to increased health problem for New Mexico residents, including various cancers, kidney disease, and reproductive problems. New Mexico has a history of uranium and numerous cases of illness tied to uranium.

The project encroaches on the Mount Taylor Traditional Cultural Property, and will create cultural impacts to local Indigenous nations, and the brief 30-day scoping period hinders proper Tribal Consultation. I would like to mention that I am an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. I lived on the Navajo Nation since I was born. My religion is Native American Church and I grew up offering prayers to Mount Taylor since I was a child. This is a sacred mountain and uranium should not be mined from Mount Taylor. I am tired. I am tired for my indigenous relatives. I am tired for the what my elders had to endure due to uranium. I am tired of what future generations have to endure due to uranium. Indigenous communities have voiced over and over, that mining uranium is harmful to our communities. Please, leave the uranium in the ground. Please, think about our precious water. Please, think about the youth and future generations. We all deserve to feel safe, we can't risk our clean water, and Mount Taylor is a scared mountain.

The timeline is inappropriate for the public to fully understand and engage in the process. The public needs at least 120 days to outreach and hear from rural community members and all New Mexico residents, especially those without quick access to online resources and those who need translation. Additionally, a longer comment period is needed for proper scientific review.

New Mexico already has a legacy of contamination and an extensive history of abandoned uranium mines, which underscore the dangers of approving new long-term mining operations. We need to clean up and not allow new mining.

I urge the Forest Service to extend the comment period and to reject the Plan of Operations to safeguard Mount Taylor, our precious water, and the Cibola National Forest.

Sincerely,

Tilly Etcitty