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First name: Lee

Last name: Rogers

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

Our home is at 333 Harshaw Creek Road. We own 56 acres along about a half mile of Harshaw Creek approximately 3.5 miles downstream from the proposed Hermosa Taylor drilling site. Our land lies within the Coronado National Forest and was part of the historic Bergier ranch. We are extremely concerned about the impact Arizona Minerals Inc. operation will have on our water, quality of life, and the unique diversity of plants and animals in the Patagonia Mountains.

First, let me thank you for extending the Scoping period and allowing me an opportunity to express my great concern for the impacts this drilling operation will further compound in the environmentally sensitive and unique Patagonia Mountains. I know that the Coronado National Forest (CNF) officials meet the letter of the law by publishing the Scoping Notice in the Sierra Vista paper that is 50 miles away and is not sold in Patagonia but, except for the efforts of many environmentally concerned people in our town, I would not have known of this proposal since there was no notification posted our Post Office or other local information source. I appreciate your extending the period for comments.

The legacy of mining in the Patagonia Mts. is one of environmental pollution and habitat destruction. The Hermosa Taylor drilling project proposed by Arizona Minerals Inc. will add to the cumulative impact on an already fragile ecosystem, use excessive amounts of water in an area facing historic water shortages due to climate change, further pollute an already polluted watershed, destroy over 200 trees, some of which are likely over 100 years old, without proper restoration, create more roads that will further impact the watershed and vegetation, and will create light and noise pollution that will impact wildlife and residents over a large area. The cumulative impacts of historic mining operations remain on the land and cannot or, at least, have not been remediated effectively. An Environmental Impact Study must be done before the further accumulation of the effects of drilling or mining operations are allowed in the Patagonia Mountains or within the Coronado National Forest.

As a local resident I drive Harshaw Road regularly. I use this same route that would support the Hermosa Taylor drilling operations to get my mail and conduct business in town. The CNF along this road is heavily used by families out camping, bicyclers, hikers, birders, and other recreationists. The additional traffic to support the proposed drilling project must also travel along Harshaw Road and will add significant public safety concerns for residents, campers, hunters, users of the Arizona Trail crossing, hikers, and bikers that use this road to access, camp and play in the CNF. Much of Harshaw Road that accesses the proposed drilling is not paved. Additional traffic to support a drilling operation will further degrade our air quality which is already full of dust and dirt from road traffic. As current climate predictions play out our area will get dryer and hotter and compound the effects of further drilling and mine operations. An Environmental Impact Study is the only way to properly understand these cumulative impacts as well as to properly manage the fragile resources of the CNF.

The CNF and the Patagonia Mts. are uniquely situated within the U.S. as the home of many endangered and threatened species as well as marginally healthy riparian habitat. It is also uniquely situated across the U.S. Mexico border and is a natural pathway for range expansion migrants such as jaguar, ocelot, bats, insects and plants. Many visitors to the CNF come specifically to experience this same diversity. Further habitat destruction, further waste of water resources, and further air, water and light pollution compound the struggle to preserve and promote diverse wildlife and plant communities. An Environmental Impact Study should be done to assess cumulative impacts caused by further drilling or mining operations within the Patagonia Mountains or within the CNF.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns,

Lee Rogers

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