

Forest Service Issues Scoping Notice For Taylor Project

Late this summer American Mining (AMI) submitted a plan of operation to the Forest Service, proposing to extend their drilling onto public land. The Forest Service issued a Scoping Notice to the public in September asking for citizen comments. On its website, the Forest Service explains: "Citizens often have valuable information about places and resources that they value and the potential environmental, social, and economic effects that proposed federal actions may have on those places and resources. NEPA's requirements provide you the means to work with the agencies so they can take your information into account."

The comments had to be submitted by October 11. According to Forest Ranger, Daisy Kinsey, there are "a lot of comments" and a "decision is many months out." If, after reading the public comments, the Forest Service decides "there are no extraordinary circumstances

related to the proposed action," they will issue a "categorical exclusion" and AMI's proposed drilling on public land will go ahead. If, however, there are found to be significant environmental impacts, they will ask for an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an even more detailed Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

Here are some of the comments published on the Forest Service Website:

"Because of AMI's existing drilling over the summer the main housing in town, the hotel, was filled up with mine workers. As was most of a new trailer park. Where will tourists and other visitors like hunters stay if there are even more miners in town for longer periods?"

"The sustainable tourism jobs will be lost forever if our public lands are permanently destroyed by mining. In 2008, visitor spending in Santa Cruz County, (cont. on next page)

Scoping Comments, cont.

Arizona amounted to 257 million dollars and accounted for over 2000 jobs. Government revenue generated by travel spending was 13.4 million dollars.”

The tourism industry in Patagonia and the surrounding areas is a sustainable, ecologically sensitive, revenue-producing industry; an industry that is NOT compatible with hard rock NOR open pit mining operations that dirty the water, foul the air, frighten the wildlife, and pollute the night air with light. An industry that does NOT threaten water supplies, endangered species, the DARK SKIES initiative, or the lives of humans and animals as literally hundreds of trucks race up and down town, county and forest roads in a race to make money by shipping our resources to foreign lands.”

“We have far greater values in the land as a whole

than we do in this kind of resource extraction. The antiquated mining law is no longer in accordance with modern day reality. If they want to use that law to develop this claim, they should do it with a pick and shovel. There are many residents here whose livelihoods and personal well-being will be disastrously injured by the activities of mining. We do not want our lives and homes sacrificed for the external exploitation of any mining company.”

Nearly everyone commented on water, the quantity, the quality, the danger of erosion and flooding, the fact that we don't know enough about our vast watershed. These are all concerns of people who work and live in the region.

If you would like to read more comments, go to <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/Letter/1309956?project=50097>