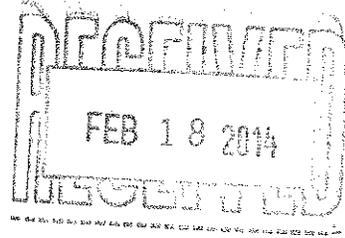


February 11, 2014

Regional Forester/Deputy Regional Forester
USFS Southwestern Region
333 Broadway SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102



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RE: Formal Objection to Final Impact Statement & Draft Record of Decision for the Rosemont Copper Project: A Proposed Mining Operation, Coronado National Forest, Nogales Ranger District

Dear Jim Upchurch, Forest Supervisor,

I am writing in response to the FEIS and Draft Record for the Rosemont Copper Project , which, I believe, does not address my concerns about the issue of both water table and surface water, water recreation, and the ecosystems surrounding the proposed mine. Another issue that I have is that Rosemont Copper is a foreign company and the Forest Service intends to give away over 5,000 acres of American forest without any compensation to the American people.

ISSUE 3: IMPACT ON WATER RESOURCES:

Even though technically this FEIS is a new draft of the Environmental Impact Statement, I feel that the **water issues have not been adequately addressed or satisfied**. To allow the mine to pump thousands of cubic feet/acres of water from our water table in the desert where there are thriving communities that depend on it, puts these communities at risk for safe potable water in the future. *Presently, the western U.S. has been in a drought for over a decade with water tables being lowered and not being replenished at a significant rate.* There is uncertainty about the amount and for how long the Southwest can rely on CAP water, especially the Tucson area. The Colorado River flow has diminished due to less rainfall and snow runoff in the West and there are several states and Mexico that have allotments of water that deplete the river even more. With the current change in climate it is unpredictable how long this drought will last. Also, the population of Arizona has increased and probably will continue to do so, which means more water will be necessary to support the population growth. (I base these statements on numerous articles about the climate, Arizona water resources, and population growth I

have read over the past year or two).As the water table is lowered usually the water quality becomes an issue, especially if it is supporting over a million or more people.

A second issue connected to the mine pumping thousands of acres of water is the price they pay for it compared to what a community consumer pays. From what I understand the mine will pay a specific amount of money for the permit and that is it. Where as we pay on a rising scale based on how much a household uses; after 10 CCF of water the price doubles and so on. If the mine were allowed to pump thousands of cubic feet of water per year for 20 years that would deplete the community water tables and most likely result in communities having to conserve more and pay more for water the most precious commodity.

Another concern is the fact that they intend to pump the water from the west side of the Santa Rita Mountains where there are several communities and businesses that depend on water. What happens to the Pecan Orchard next to Rosemont's property where that will pump the water from? If the water table is lowered will it hurt the orchard and the business that is well known in that area? ***I believe the communities that have been established surrounding the Santa Rita Mountains long before the mine should have the right to object to their water table and forest areas being confiscated by a foreign mining company.*** Also, I believe that the pipe line and pumps will hurt the wildlife and ecosystem of the forest due to the noise and access to maintain it. Even though the report claims that is minimal, it is not because heavy equipment will be used and those working on it usually are only interested in getting the job done.

A third water issue is the fact that as the mining pit becomes deeper it sucks the water into the pit that would normally flow east toward Las Ciengas and other surrounding canyons and grasslands. The report basically states that this is not significant, but at the same times it states that it does not know the effects of the seeps and springs in the area of the mine. I disagree because, as I stated before, the climate is changing and this area has technically been in a drought. If these grasslands and surrounding areas do not receive an adequate amount of water and stream flow or a long period of time (10 to 20 years) more dry lands/ deserts may develop. Theses areas in turn may become devoid of vegetation, thus creating large tracts of dirt which translate into dust and dust storms, which would create hazards for the communities nearby. In my opinion the report really did not address these long term effects. It will also affect fauna of the area as their habitat changes, as well as, the recreational opportunities that many of us enjoy.

ISSUE 5: IMPACT ON VEGETATION LOSS, PLANTS AND ANIMALS;

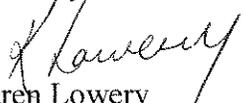
Another major concerns deals with the ecosystems of the areas, reclamation and the tailings piles. The report gave an overview of the reclamation that Rosemont would initiate as early as year 1 and continue until 3 years after the closure of the mine. It is my understanding that part of the reclamations and control of the tailings would include

dumping plies of rock on the tailings. This would become unsightly and would not restore the ecosystem or natural habitat. I did not find any clear or detailed plan on how and what will be used to reclaim the Tailings pile. ***My concern is that there are few if any native plants that would grow or thrive on tailings.*** (Case in point: look at the Asarco mine, Green Valley or the old Ruby mine. The Ruby mine closed in the 1940's and yet there is a quarter mile wide and a mile long and 30 foot deep Tailings pile still there with nothing growing on it after 70 years. It is a health hazard with unknown poisonous chemicals as animals and humans walk on it, as the wind blows particles into the air and the rain washes part of it downstream.) The composition of Tailings is not conducive to plant life. Topsoil may be put on it, but will it allow plants to grow if it is blown away or washed off by large rainstorms. By planning non-native vegetation on tailings is not really restoring the natural ecosystem in the area. The native plants attract the native fauna, so to restore the area to its natural condition native vegetation is necessary. I do not believe that Rosemont is capable of restoring the Tailings pile to an attractive native ecosystem.

I gathered from the report that Rosemont will be contributing a certain amount of money to several funds in order to assure that the monitoring and restoration is accomplished. My concern is that Rosemont may not fulfill their obligation in this matter. There is no guarantee that they will not file bankruptcy, or not be able to continue to contribute to those funds. If this should happen, what is the recourse that the Forest Service would take? My guess is that it would be a long and costly battle in court. In support of my concern and borrowing a quote from National Geographic, February 2014, **“The mining industry doesn't have a good history of keeping promises.”**

In conclusion, I hope that Rosemont Mine will be denied any permits to develop a mine in the Santa Rita Mountains. I believe, the communities, the people, and the natural ecosystems would suffer due to the lowering of the water table, lose of prime habitat for native plants and animals, and endangerment to health that a mining project would cause for us now and for future generations. The “ancient” mining laws should not be guiding the decisions of the UUS Forest Service, but rather the impact the mine would have on the surrounding communities and ecosystems, that provide recreation and healthy habitat for all.

Sincerely,


Karen Lowery
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