



## **CEA Foundation Exposes Massive Flaws in Mine Report**

CEA Foundation

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For Immediate Release:

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Grass Valley, CA – March 30, 2022 – CEA Foundation and its MineWatch coalition members delivered comments to Nevada County’s Planning Commission on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed reopening of Idaho-Maryland Mine today. Experts, volunteers, and legal minds reviewed the DEIR’s 1,000+ pages to provide a comprehensive review of the technical studies, impact assessments and proposed mitigations provided in the DEIR.

Once the center of the famed California gold rush, at stake is a community that has transformed into a scenic and cultural magnet for families, retirees, and tourists from across the western United States. If approved, this mine would be opened under the community’s feet.

“Mining is our past, not our future”, said retired capital planner, Paul Schwartz. “Today’s economic engine is recreation based, but we’re also facing historic drought and fire risk. Protecting precious resources like water, air quality, and our peaceful rural setting is job number one.”

“This DEIR is riddled with errors, omissions, and legal flaws”, said Ralph Silberstein, President of CEA Foundation. “The County will have to make significant changes and recirculate the draft. We’ll see many more impacts listed as significant and unavoidable.

Beyond the EIR, our Supervisors will be faced with making the final decision. In the long run, it will very simply come down to whether the mine is good for our community.”

The applicant, Rise Gold, was responsible for delivering the vast majority of the technical studies used by the County’s hired consultant to determine the impacts. “Surprisingly, the studies lacked key information one would normally expect and were often internally inconsistent.”, said Silberstein.

Dewatering the mine is a key concern. “Groundwater modeling in fractured rock systems is considered unreliable even when everything is done right,” said Silberstein. According to experts, Rise Gold’s model has fundamental flaws in the initial start point of the model and baseline data assumptions – all of which throw off the entire analysis. The result is a DEIR that concludes that groundwater levels would drop a maximum of 10 feet and no more than 30 local wells would be a risk. Experts, however, recognize the extremely high degree of uncertainty involved. Comments submitted to the County by the community and the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) include requests to expand the potential area of impact, provide a comprehensive groundwater monitoring program, and post a \$14 million bond.

Dealing with mine waste is another major concern. “Looking at the rock core sample analysis, it is abundantly clear that asbestos will be a gnarly problem that will require comprehensive management. Mining operations don’t get to just haul and dump rock like the days of old,” said Silberstein. “Air and water quality regulations will significantly restrict throughput and the costs will be exorbitant.” Experts found the plans to mitigate fugitive dust to be inadequate. They also found no credible evidence that the mine tailings could be effectively sold to 3rd parties for fill or offsite construction.

Climate change has increased forest fires and parched lands, resulting in the newest Federal and State greenhouse gas reduction goals. The DEIR used a threshold of 10,000 metric tons per year for greenhouse gas emissions but failed to include some elements that puts the project over that limit and makes it a significant impact. In the long run however, the limit defined in the DEIR is likely to be found irrelevant. Recent changes mean the County’s threshold must be established at “net zero”.

Following is a quick list of additional gaps in the draft:

- Cleanup of the toxic, pre-superfund Centennial site that would be used to dump mine waste is not included in the DEIR but is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Missing construction time estimates throw off the entire analysis of noise, traffic, and air.

- The DEIR incorrectly assesses nighttime noise and underestimates the noise of dumping mine waste near established residential neighborhoods.
- Air traffic hazards and aesthetic impacts need to be studied further due the likelihood of a massive fog plume that could be created by warm, saturated air ventilation.
- Blasting plans don't follow U.S. mining guidelines that restrict blasting during evening hours.
- The plan doesn't demonstrate that the impact on biological and aquatic resources would be less than significant.
- Meteorological data used to assess the health risk of airborne pollutants doesn't fit Grass Valley's profile or accurately reflect local conditions.

Rise Gold appears to be spending a lot of money 'marketing' to our community claiming nothing but net-positives and declaring "the Science is Clear", but the reality is completely different. This DEIR reveals significant flaws in the analysis. Nevada County residents and the Supervisors who will be making the final decision deserve an accurate environmental report that shows the full extent of the impacts the mine project would have on our community.

View the CEA Foundation and coalition comments here: [www.minewatchnc.org/post/deir-comments-mar2022](http://www.minewatchnc.org/post/deir-comments-mar2022)

For more information about the potential re-opening of the Idaho-Maryland Mine visit: [www.MineWatchNC.org](http://www.MineWatchNC.org)

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About CEA Foundation: Community Environmental Advocates Foundation (CEA Foundation) performs research, education, and advocacy to promote responsible land use and environmental protection policies in Nevada County. [www.cea-nc.org](http://www.cea-nc.org) CEA Foundation is the sponsor of MineWatch, a campaign that brings together a coalition of nonprofit organizations, residents, and businesses opposed to the mine. [www.MineWatchNC.org](http://www.MineWatchNC.org)