

Mt. Taylor Mine — End the Standby Game

Mt. Taylor Mine is now owned by Rio Grande Resources Corporation (RGR), a subsidiary of General Atomics Corporation. The mine was operated by Gulf Mineral Resource Company from 1980-1985 and by Chevron Resources Company from 1985-1990, before the mine ceased production altogether.

RGR has now requested a Standby - Return to Operations Permit.



Mine owners have requested 3 Standby periods since the New Mexico Mining Act was enacted in 1993. RGR applied for its third Standby permit revision in 2010.

MASE appealed the 2010 Standby permit revision that was granted by the Mining & Minerals Division (MMD), based on MMD's failure to allow meaningful public participation. A New Mexico district court agreed and ordered MMD to conduct further public hearings. A new public hearing was held in May 2015.

Rio Grande Resources has postponed cleanup by continuing to request Standby Permits including its most recent request in 2014 for their final Stand-by Permit and at the same time requested a new Standby Permit - Return to Operations.

Under New Mexico mining law, a mine operator must either conduct phased reclamation during production or close the mine and conduct final reclamation. A mining company can delay expensive reclamation activities by requesting multiple standby periods.

MASE is concerned about the spread of contamination during prolonged stand-by periods from radioactive and toxic waste rock stockpiled at the mine site and from ground water mixing in the open mine shaft.

Faced with only one remaining standby period, RGR now says it will begin producing uranium again. But demand for uranium is not expected to increase for at least another 10-15 years, if ever.

MMD should not allow mines to be called "active" simply to avoid reclamation. Active mines should be producing minerals and economic benefits to communities, or be cleaned up. Mines should be cleaned up after each period of operation and not allowed to pollute while waiting for a boom market that may never come.

Talking Points

Mt Taylor is a Zombie mine - it is not operating and it is not being cleaned up.

- Mine operated for only 8 years and stopped in 1990.
- Mine has neither produced uranium nor been reclaimed since then.
- **Rio Grande Resources/General Atomic's predictions that the international uranium market will improve ignores the readily available information that current uranium production will satisfy demand for years, possibly decades.**
- NM Mining and Minerals Division must consider the fact that the only economically viable activity at Mt Taylor Mine for the foreseeable future is reclamation activities.
- **Cleaning up uranium mines would bring much needed jobs to our communities.**

Environmental Protections

- Rio Grande Resources has received Standby Permits since 1994 and has not started reclamation.
- Waste piles, ore piles, evaporation lagoons, and mine shafts have not been permanently reclaimed.
- Rio Grande Resources has postponed cleanup by continuing to request Standby Permits including its most recent request in 2014 for their final Standby Permit and at the same time a New Standby Permit - Return to Operations.
- **Standby Permits allow Rio Grande Resources to postpone cleanup and reclamation making the pollution and contamination worse and depriving the community of the only economic development opportunity the mine will have to offer for years and perhaps ever.**
- All levels of government in the United States are responsible under the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) Treaty to clean up radioactive sites as soon as possible.

Sacred Sites

- Mount Taylor was permanently listed in the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties by the Cultural Properties Review Committee on June 5, 2009.
- Significant and irreparable cultural and religious damages have resulted from the failure of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department to consult with the nineteen Pueblos, and other affected tribes prior to determine probable impacts to regional groundwater, the La Jara and San Mateo Creek drainage areas, and cultural properties resulting from exploratory drilling and past uranium mining.
- **The All Indian Pueblo Council declares the land around Mt. Taylor unsuitable for mining activities due to its widespread cultural significance as a sacred site by all regional Tribes, including the nineteen Pueblos and the unique value of the area's hydrologic resources to northwestern New Mexico.**

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