

Amigos Bravos • Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment

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Mt. Taylor Mine "Return to Active" Permit
Will Zombie Uranium Mine Continue to Avoid Cleanup?

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On December 29, 2017 the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division (MMD) issued a Return to Active Permit for Rio Grande Resources' (RGR) Mt. Taylor Mine. The Mt. Taylor Mine has been on standby status polluting the surrounding environment for the last 17 years.

During a December 4th, 2015 hearing the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) and Amigos Bravos challenged RGR's unreasonable predictions of the economic viability of the mine in the face of a continued depressed international uranium market. Two years later - 2 more years that cleanup has not occurred - MMD has issued a decision ignoring testimony on the impacts from pollution to our communities from the Mt. Taylor Mine and the failure of RGR to conduct interim reclamation.

MASE and Amigos Bravos will appeal MMD's radical decision to allow a mine to go back on "active" status despite no realistic likelihood that mining will take place. The permit will allow 8 years of so-called "reactivation" activities. However, nothing in the application and documents indicates that there will be mining production. RGR's own expert testified during the permit hearing that the market would be unfavorable for another 10-15 years.

Now the state has granted the mine's request to move to active status. When the mine is in active or standby status reclamation requirements are put on hold.

"Mt. Taylor is a zombie mine," said Susan Gordon, coordinator for MASE. "It's neither producing uranium nor is it cleaning up its ongoing pollution. This is simply a game by RGR to avoid having to start reclamation."

"RGR has avoided cleaning up its mess for long enough," said Rachel Conn, Projects Director for Amigos Bravos. "In its recent decision, the state is failing in its duties to protect groundwater for future generations."

The Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment is a network of groups located in the Grants Mining Belt of northwestern New Mexico that works collaboratively to stop new uranium mines and cleanup wastes. www.masecoalition.org

Amigos Bravos is a statewide water advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the waters of New Mexico. www.amigosbravos.org