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BLM to withdraw approval of Florida Mountains mine in response to citizens' lawsuit

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DEMING, N.M. – The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has told a Federal Court in New Mexico that it “intends to withdraw” its decision to allow the development of a Dolomite mine on public land in the Florida Mountains south of Deming, New Mexico. [A Motion for Stay of All Proceedings in Case Number 2:20-cv-00924](#), filed January 11, 2021, states that a new decision will be issued at some point in 2021.

The mine project, proposed by the investment group American Magnesium, would scar a pristine part of the mountain range south of Deming. The proposed project is adjacent to the Florida Mountains Wilderness Study Area and overlooks scenic State Highway 11. [Five New Mexico organizations filed a petition in Federal Court last September](#) alleging the BLM failed to properly follow laws and regulations by not fully disclosing the environmental impacts of the proposed mine.

Friends of the Floridas, a local group in Luna County, filed the lawsuit. The locals were joined by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (New Mexico Wild), WildEarth Guardians, Gila Resources Information Project, and Amigos Bravos.

“We are pleased that the BLM has decided to take another look at this ill-advised use of pristine public lands” according to **Friends of the Floridas President Wesley Light**. “The destruction of this important natural habitat would be a long-term detriment to the wellbeing of Luna County residents, as well as a threat to the retirement and recreational segments of our economy” according to Light.

The local community has long expressed concerns that the environmental impacts reviewed by the BLM did not include details of ore transportation and ore processing. The lawsuit alleges the failure to consider these impacts does not provide the full disclosure required by law. Local residents have also contested the BLM’s conclusion

that the impacts caused by noise, dust, blasting and heavy truck traffic would not be significant.

Friends of the Floridas Vice President Jackie Nobles added, “We call this the Magic Mine, since 300,000 tons per year of dolomite would be removed without knowing where it will be sent, how it will be processed, how much waste rock will be created, and where the waste will go. I guess the BLM figures the rock will just disappear once it leaves the public land. All of this with less than a dozen jobs being expected.”

Additional Quotes:

"Mining on public lands has had a devastating impact on water quality across the west. Our public land managers need to step up and do a better job at protecting our land, water, heritage, and health from extractive land use practices. BLM's withdrawal of their decision on the Florida dolomite mine will be a good first step."

–Rachel Conn, Amigos Bravos

“BLM’s decision to revisit its approval of the proposed American Magnesium dolomite mine is good news for Luna County residents, the environment, and the region’s public lands. The agency’s decision was based on an incomplete picture of the impacts of the proposed mine. The community and environmental impacts of mining as well as processing the ore must be evaluated.”

-Allyson Siwik, Executive Director, Gila Resources Information Project

“The Florida Mountains offer both quick wild escapes to Luna County residents and true opportunities for solitude to recreationalists across New Mexico. Mining, and the sights and sounds that are associated with mining, will have short- and long-term detrimental effects to the naturally magnificent landscape and solitude offered by this well-loved range and well-kept secret. We are encouraged that BLM will withdraw its decision to approve an under-analyzed mining project and we will continue to monitor and advocate against efforts to sacrifice our natural resources in the name of marginal economic gain.”

–Logan Glasenapp, New Mexico Wild

“This kind of extractive, destructive use of our public lands cannot be the way of the future. Desert ecosystems, like those of the Florida Mountains, are already imperiled by climate change and biodiversity loss. Our public land management agencies must be implementing practices that promote resilience, not exploitation.”

-Leia Barnett, WildEarth Guardians, Greater Gila Guardian