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PRESS RELEASE

Residents Urge County to Set up Proper Safeguards for their Wells

Wells Coalition Presents Requests to Supervisors

Nevada City, CA – December 13, 2022 – Today, well owners and community organizations urged the Nevada County Board of Supervisors to implement better safeguards to protect residents' wells. Their comments focused on the possible risks and potential damage to homeowners' wells connected with the proposed re-opening of the Idaho-Maryland Mine.

RISE Gold Corp., a company headquartered in Canada, is applying to re-open the mine. The above-ground properties sit on the edge of Grass Valley's City limits; however, the company also purchased underground mineral rights covering over 2,500 acres in the same area. Rise proposes pumping over a million gallons of water daily to dewater the mine. Residents are concerned that dewatering risks impacting hundreds of wells in the area.

"For miles in every direction from the mine site, we have densely populated land, including hundreds of homes with domestic wells that produce our only source of clean water," said Tony Lauria, an impacted homeowner and member of The Wells Coalition. "In the event of a well gone dry during dewatering, we would be thrown into chaos trying to save our families from severe undue hardship."

Earlier this year, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the mine proposed minimal protections for nearby well owners. Mitigations included NID hookups for just thirty homes and a future plan to use just fifteen "monitoring" wells to estimate impacts across hundreds of wells. Experts from the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and the community found these measures to be remarkably inadequate.

"We are astounded that a comprehensive domestic well monitoring program was not established before the Draft EIR was published," said Christy Hubbard of The Wells Coalition. "We are here today to ask the County to facilitate the development of this program as soon as possible and work with the community to ensure its viability."

"There are over 300 wells near Rise Gold's mineral rights area, but the DEIR did not provide any current monitoring for these wells" said Gary Pierazzi of The Wells Coalition. The DEIR relied on sparse patches of data from over 15 years ago and deferred the collection of reliable baseline data until "later". Such a deferral does not comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

"Many homeowners – and our school – lost their wells on the San Juan Ridge after a mining company breached a water bearing fault-line," said Sol Henson, President of San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association. "Some wells may have lost 50% capacity or had arsenic levels rise above drinking water standards. But without baseline data, owners could not prove that the mine had impacted their wells."

The Wells Coalition urged Supervisors to:

- Initiate a comprehensive domestic well monitoring program for a minimum of 3 years to collect reliable baseline data on individual wells.
- Include the new baseline data in a revised Draft EIR so it can be reviewed and then used in the decision-making process.
- Develop the domestic well monitoring program as soon as possible – before the EIR is finalized and prior to any dewatering of the mine.

“Well owners are alarmed that the County seems to be skipping the important step of measuring existing groundwater conditions for well owners near the mine. We believe the community is owed the same commonsense measures the County has offered in the past and that the environmental review process requires it,” stated Ralph Silberstein, President of Community Environmental Advocates Foundation (CEA Foundation).”

Comments on the DEIR are currently being reviewed by Nevada County. The Board of Supervisors could vote on the proposal as early as 2023.

For more information about the challenges facing well owners visit:

<https://www.theunion.com/news/hung-out-to-dry-well-owners-contend-with-idaho-maryland-mine-reports-findings/>

For more information about the potential impacts to water visit: [Drains our Water | MineWatchNC.org](#)

The mission of the Community Environmental Advocates Foundation (CEA Foundation) is to perform research, education, and advocacy to promote public policy and actions resulting in responsible land use and environmental protection in Nevada County and the Sierra Nevada region. www.cea-nc.org. The Wells Coalition includes residents from over 100 homes near the Idaho-Maryland Mine. wells@cea-nc.org. The group is a member of CEA Foundation’s MineWatch coalition and campaign, a grassroots effort to oppose the mine. www.MineWatchNC.org