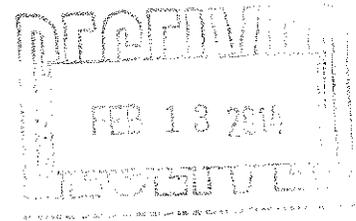


Reviewing Officer, Rosemont Mine EIS
Southwest Region
United States Forest Service
333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102



STATEMENT ON TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

I testified at least twice at Forest Service sponsored meetings about the Rosemont mine proposal. I believe I left written comments but I could find no response to them in the EIS. IN ANY CASE, THE EIS HAS BROUGHT UP AN ENTIRELY NEW AND DISTURBING TRANSPORTATION PLAN THAT HAS HAD NO PUBLIC INPUT. I know that many of my concerns are being addressed by others so I will restrict my current comments to issues specific to my role as the only physician serving the Sonoita and Patagonia area.

Several times a month I have to make the difficult decision to transport a patient emergently to Nogales or Tucson by either ground ambulance or helicopter. My transport decision is based on where the patient can receive adequate care and how quickly that care needs to be accessed. The decision to use a helicopter often results in a bill of thousands of dollars to the patient (or to the state of Arizona by way of our AHCCCS Medicaid equivalent). I am concerned that the originally proposed use of highway 83 for transport of copper ore will make the need for a helicopter much more common. I see no evidence that you addressed this concern in the EIS. Now I am truly alarmed that you have suggested that not only a 10 mile segment of highway 83 from Rosemont junction to I-10 could be congested with slow moving difficult to pass copper trucks but you have added the possibility that 45 miles from Rosemont to Nogales by way of Sonoita could be impacted. I will have little choice but to use the helicopter as my main choice of transportation in this scenario. My patients often balk at the idea of air transport because of the cost. I cannot justify the additional 30 minutes or more of transport time to send patients with chest pain or stroke symptoms by ground transportation obstructed by mining trucks.

My second concern: I work for a clinic staffed by Mariposa Community Health Center in Nogales. I live in Sonoita. All the other licensed staff members including the full time nurse practitioner and the nursing staff commute from Nogales or Rio Rico. Mariposa has never been able to find qualified licensed staff from Patagonia. It has always been a struggle to find any staff willing to commute to Patagonia from other communities. The added commute time and the stress of fighting mining traffic will make staffing much more difficult, if not impossible. Mandatory staff meetings in Nogales several times a month require scheduled time away from patient care. The increased commute time to meetings will cause a substantial decrease in the hours available for patient care.

This completely unanticipated broadening of the transportation plan has not been subjected to public scrutiny and should justify opening a new round of public input.

Sincerely,
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