

Friday, February 14, 2014

To: Cal Joyner, Southwestern Regional Forester  
USFS Southwestern Region  
333 Broadway SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Re: Formal Objection to Final Impact Statement and Draft Record of Decision for the Rosemont Copper Project: A Proposed Mining Operation, Coronado Nation Forest

1. Objector's Name and contact information

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2.

Project Name: Rosemont Copper Project: A Proposed Mining Operation  
Responsible Official: Jim Upchurch, Forest Supervisor  
National Forest, Ranger District: Coronado National Forest, Nogales Ranger District

Objection 1:

1. Transportation: Use of a rail spur to the mine site to haul equipment and supplies to the mine and haul ore from the mine.

I am the author of Letter #9059. I asked about the comparison of costs and benefits of using trucks to haul supplies to the mine and ore from the mine vs. using a rail line to the mine. I wanted to know the costs of such a rail option vs. the benefits to be gained.

The benefits include the greater efficiency of rail transport vs. road transport. Trains use much less energy (diesel fuel) than trucks for moving the same amount of cargo. The plans state that much, if not all, of the ore will end up on a train anyway. Why not put it on a train to start with?

The FEIS mentions the costs and difficulty of getting the right-of-way for such a rail line, both in terms of the time required and the costs. However, there is no actual cost estimate for this right of way acquisition. There is also no cost estimate for actually constructing the rail line.

Finally, there is no cost estimate of the benefit. Trains use much less energy to move the same material. The expense of trans-loading from trucks to train would be skipped. The trucks would not be on State Hwy's 83 and 82, which reduces the risk of traffic accidents and the maintenance cost of the roads.

I would guess that trains of 10 to 20 cars would be loaded at the mine and then hauled to Tucson. These could then be put into regular mixed-freight trains heading to the desired destination. Or, they could be collected in Tucson into unit trains of 60 to 80 cars. (The limit on the train length

would likely be the total weight — I do not know the weight/volume of copper ore. I do assume that information is known about the proposed mine.)

I would like to know cost estimates and a comparison for this project. Just because something (such as acquiring the right-of-way) is hard is not enough information. Put some actual numbers (cost and time) on the railroad estimate and compare that to the costs of using trucks.

Thank you.

Patrick T. Homer