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Nevada County ends application process for reopening San Juan Ridge Gold Mine



Opponents of the reopening of the San Juan Ridge Mine attended a Rally for Clean Water in 2014 on the steps of the Rood Center prior to a board of supervisors' meeting. Some of the opponents hold bundles of cards, filled out by people against the reopening, to give to the supervisors.



Opponents of the reopening of the San Juan Ridge Mine, "Rally for Clean Water" on the steps of the Rood Center, and handed bundles of cards to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, by the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association and the South Yuba River Citizens League opposites opposed to the mine opening. Ladies holding the bundles of cards for the supervisors.

Nevada County officials have closed an application filed in an attempt to reopen the San Juan Ridge Gold Mine, stopping a process that began years ago.

County Planning Director Brian Foss this week sent a letter to the San Juan Mining Corp., informing it that applications for a use permit and reclamation plan had been closed.

The letter, dated Monday, came at the end of a six-month extension period for the project. The company should have scheduled a meeting to develop a data-gathering procedure for the use permit and reclamation plan by March 1. The county, however, received no response, Foss said.

"As of this date, no response has been received and no contact has been made with County staff by your team," Foss writes. "Therefore, the Use Permit and Reclamation Plan applications are now closed."

Foss said San Juan Mining Corp. would have to resubmit an application and pay associated fees if it wants to reopen the process.

"After the stress and trauma experienced due to the impact on wells in the 1990s, the community has been staunchly opposed to the reopening of this mine, and can now heave a sigh of relief." — Sol Henson, president of the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association

Tim Callaway, president and CEO of the mining company, couldn't be reached for comment.

The San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association and South Yuba River Citizens League hailed the county's action in a news release.

“After the stress and trauma experienced due to the impact on wells in the 1990s, the community has been staunchly opposed to the reopening of this mine, and can now heave a sigh of relief,” said Sol Henson, president of the San Juan Ridge group.

Caleb Dardick, executive director of SYRCL, echoed those sentiments.

“By taking this action, the County is removing a substantial threat to the habitat of our beloved Yuba River watershed,” he said.

According to Foss, the county worked with the mining company in their efforts to gather ground water data in the area of the mine along Jackass Flats. That data collection began in late 2013.

“We wanted them to collect data for one year,” Foss added. “They monitored a number of wells for five or six months, then that data collection stopped.”

County officials tried to meet with mine officials, though a meeting never occurred, Foss said.

Then, in August, the county received a letter requesting a six-month hold on the project. The county agreed, setting the end date on that hold for March 1.

Foss’ letter to Callaway states the company had until March to schedule a meeting. The county halted the application process when it received no contact.

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of 3



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