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Tom Behlmer: Nevada County Board of Supervisors, require this before approving Rise Gold

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Other Voices
Tom Behlmer

If Rise Gold is serious about being a good neighbor, they should use electric trucks instead of diesel for the 50 to 100 round trips each day, seven days a week. Electric trucks are made by Volvo, Daimler, BYD and Nikola. This would reduce noise, soot and pollution.

Second, for those whose wells are dewatered, require Rise to reimburse the homeowner for water until the homeowner's well can be safely restored and to secure this obligation with a bond. The hydrology report says only a few wells are at risk. Then why is Rise unwilling to reimburse for water to all affected home owners? These two mentioned items should be a requirement imposed on Rise by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors before considering a permit.

It's understood that the need for and difficulty to attract investment capital to the county to ensure its continuing vitality, but be careful for what we wish for when there is an existing housing shortage. Rental housing in the area is in short supply. What will happen if there is a large influx of people seeking housing? Will this push up rents throughout the area worsening the affordability problem making it difficult for workers already here to afford to stay? According to one local property manager, they have a wait list of 50 for when any of the 450 units they manage become available.

Could this negatively affect the labor pool and businesses that rely on local workers? Just asking. The house purchase market is not as constricted. There are several housing projects in the works, but weren't they supposed to help the existing residents with affordable housing? Adding more housing quickly could be difficult considering how long it has taken for the Loma Rica Ranch and Dorsey development to move forward. These developments might absorb people who are now able to work from home and want to relocate from the expensive Bay Area.

One of the arguments for the mine is job creation. [According to company documents](#) [↗](#), 312 jobs will be created. In table 3-7 of the project description, 212 jobs will be in the mine and 36 will be management or technical. How many currently live here have either the technical skills or desire to work underground? That leaves 64 above ground non-management jobs. To put the job creation in perspective, together Kane's and Maria's restaurants combined employed 96 people pre-COVID-19. The mine will not be a major provider of jobs for people living here. Yes, mining jobs do provide a higher wage than restaurants.

Noise from construction is allowed to exceed normal levels according to existing county rules. The Rise Gold construction of above ground buildings is proposed to be 18 months.

If Rise fails to receive a permit, the land could be sold and used by a company with a smaller footprint whose workforce could be more home grown instead of from outside the area. It is zoned light industrial and Rise wants it rezoned as light industrial – mineral extraction. On page five, table two of Rise's Project Overview, the surrounding area is described as being open space and low density. An ore truck would be leaving or returning every nine minutes at best or four minutes at worst depending on the pace of the mine. Plus, there would be supply trucks and 300 workers commuting to the site; all this congregating on a low density rural residential area.

This won't be ["a whisper" that Don Rogers refers](#) to, but more of a semi steady din 16 hours per day, seven days a week. Rise's stated hours of operation, not conjecture. It is not so much the intensity of the noise, but frequency.

In the air quality and noise reports that have been submitted, they often use the phrase does, "not reach significant threshold," however cumulatively they become an 80-year nuisance, even the silica dust, which according to Rise's report on page 41, does elevate the risk of cancer by a very, very small amount.

Let's hope the mitigation efforts, promised by the company in its reports, for pollution, dust etc., are strictly followed.

Tom Behlmer lives in Grass Valley.

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