

# The Proposed Roca Honda Uranium Mine and New Uranium Mining in New Mexico

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## I. Environmental and Public Health Impacts

### A. Water

#### 1. Quantity

- a. Millions of gallons of water pumped.
- b. Unclear where treated water will go/ how it will be used.
- c. De-watering activities will dry up springs in the short term.
- d. De-watering will cause significant strain on groundwater supply for decades.

#### 2. Quality

- a. Backfilling shafts with waste may cause increase in contaminants.
- b. De-watering may increase concentration of contaminants that are now more dilute.

### B. Air

1. Impacts of radon are currently calculated to be very close to regulatory limits; accounting for bias and error may change those calculations.

C. Transportation

1. No evaluation of risks associated with ore transport to mill because no mill has been identified.
2. No consultation with Tribes or other communities along transportation route because no route identified.

D. Cumulative Impacts

1. No analysis of impacts associated with multiple mines.
2. No analysis of impacts associated with mine + mill.
3. No analysis of impacts of mine combined with impacts from existing mine and mill waste.
  - a. Emerging data show health effects of living near mines and mills is significant:
    - i. Increased cancer
    - ii. Increased heart disease
    - iii. Increased hypertension
    - iv. Increased miscarriage and birth defects
    - v. Increased psychological trauma

E. Environmental Justice

1. Communities that are already burdened by extensive environmental and public health impacts should not be asked to bear even more.
2. Uranium impacted communities should not be forced to choose between clean up and new mines.
3. Uranium impacted communities should be able to choose sustainable and healthy economic development.

RECOMMENDATION: Any policy must consider new uranium mining's environmental, economic and public health **costs** in addition to any potential benefits.

## II. Economic Impacts

### A. Positive benefits modest

1. All uranium mining combined might create 1600 jobs statewide during the entire period of mining.

2. All uranium mining would create only a small percentage of personal income statewide.

3. All uranium mining combined would create only a small increase in state and county revenues, unlikely to offset costs associated with mining.

### B. Uranium Market

1. Uranium prices flat since 1980s.

2. Current spot prices falling.

3. Current long term prices flat to falling (\$39.50/lb. on 7/3/13).

4. Worldwide demand soft:

a. Europe moving away from nuclear

b. Nuclear tentative in Japan

c. Move away from nuclear in US:

i. Crystal River NPP (Fla.) shut down

ii. San Onofre NPP (San Diego) shut down

iii. Kewaunee NPP (WI) shut down

iv. Vermont Yankee (VT) and Indian Point (NY) are likely to be shut down in the near future.

v. Private sector does not see nuclear as a viable investment.

d. Only state supported nuclear viable:

i. China

ii. Russia

iii. Korea

iv. India

5. U.S. renewed purchase of downblended uranium from Russia for another year.

C. Half of New Mexico's uranium resources are beneath the Navajo Nation, which has banned uranium mining and processing.

RECOMMENDATION: New uranium mining is speculative at best. Policy emphasis should be on cleaning up existing uranium mining and milling contamination as a way to generate employment and revenue.

### III. Renewable Energy Market

A. 2011 renewable energy production surpassed nuclear as measured in BTUs (2.245 quadrillion BTUs vs. 2.125 quadrillion BTUs).

B. Renewables currently supply 12% of U.S. energy.

C. Renewables currently adding capacity faster than any other energy source (renewables accounted for 82% of new electricity capacity in Q1 2013).

D. Texas, California, and Iowa national leaders in renewable production according to the Energy Information Administration.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Given relative impacts and benefits, any policy should focus on long term, sustainable green jobs instead of new uranium mining.