

Donna Gallup for State House

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For Release,

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Donna Gallup candidate for House District 53, has sent the following letter to the Commissioners of Weld and Larimer County for their review and consideration.

May 14, 2008

Weld County Commissioners
915 Tenth Street
P.O. Box 758
Greeley, CO 80632

Dear Sirs:

As a mother of a child with multiple sclerosis, another who had ovarian cancer, and a recent cancer survivor myself, I became very concerned when I first heard about the uranium mining efforts in northern Weld County. The potential health issues surrounding uranium mining caused grave concern for my family. We love Fort Collins, but we'd been through enough and we began to wonder if we should stay or move. Uranium, after all, is radioactive; poisonous at best, is it not? And *in-situ leach*; what does that mean? As far as I was concerned, nothing good could come out of uranium mining. It was a threat to our health, our property, and our very lives, but before making a drastic decision like moving, I decided to find some answers to questions such as: What is in-situ mining and what kind of threats does it pose for our community? Why are these mining companies interested in Colorado?

With my questions in hand and my fears in check, I hit the books to do research about uranium mining and its effects. What I found was astounding. Almost embarrassing because, in summary, we are in the 21st century and the science and technology we have today is so amazing. Today's mining techniques aren't the techniques used in our grandparent's day, or even our parent's day. I was embarrassed to think that I almost let my fears outweigh my intelligence when weighing in on this issue. I found that in-situ recovery of uranium, in its thirty year history, has never contaminated a drinking water supply or caused any ill health effects. But why didn't we hear the truth about in-situ uranium mining from our legislators? Why did they let the horror stories continue, and worse, plant seeds of devastation and doubt themselves? My fear soon turned to frustration

and frustration to anger when I read the Opinion column in Sunday's paper. (The Coloradoan, May 11, 2008).

There the editors of The Coloradoan printed a glowing opinion about our four local citizen legislators, specifically using House Bill 1161 (uranium mining and restoration of ground water) as an example of their collaborative efforts. But knowing that they had to know the same facts about uranium mining and didn't share them, I raise my eyebrows when looking at the intentions of their bipartisanship and the purpose of the House Bill itself. Let's face it folks, this is an election year. Everyone should be making nice. But now I have more questions that I believe the constituents of District 53, of which I am one, deserve to have answered. And Truthfully!

- A vocal minority of Northern Coloradoans shouted, "NO uranium mining in Colorado," and our legislators blindly listened. They went to Denver to write legislation to stop uranium mining, but instead just wrote MORE standards for mining companies to follow. Why?
- They had the chance to educate their constituents about in-situ mining instead of playing on their fears. I know for a fact that at least one of the legislators is an engineering graduate from CSU, owned his own 'mining clean-up' company, and as a state legislator, has the ear of his constituents. Who else could have done a better job at teaching us the truth about in-situ mining than he? He decided against doing the right thing and chose the easy, politically expedient path of playing upon people's latent fear of radiation instead.
- What is the definition of 'in-situ'? According to Webster, *in the original place*. To leach means *to remove from a substance by the action of a percolating liquid*. So, logically, to mine by in-situ leaching means to extract a desired substance from a host substance by using a percolating liquid and then draw the extracted substance up out of its original place. What is the easiest, fastest, safest way to do this? Encase everything in pipe. In fact, if one envisions a water filtering system, one will understand the basic concepts of in-situ mining. There is no digging, no flying dust, no build up of radon gas, no radiation, and no superfund threats. In-situ recovery duplicates nature's own process that placed the uranium deposit in the sandstone. With in-situ recovery, nature itself protects the water and us from the historical adverse affects of mining.
- What is an Aquifer? Is it an underground lake or river from which we draw our water? No, actually, an aquifer, according to Webster, is *a water-bearing rock, rock formation, or group of rock formations*. Why didn't Mr. Fischer explain that the Fox Hills aquifer is not an underground river, but a layer of solid sandstone, much like the flatirons, that has tiny pores that allow water to accumulate. Using the above definition of in-situ leach mining, uranium ions will be extracted from this sandstone by using bubbling (or oxygenated) water. Poisons are not going to be pumped into a liquid (river, lake) where they can float around and contaminate the whole. Oxygenated water is going to be pumped into rock and the water in the rock, which holds the uranium ions, then that ion filled solution is siphoned to the surface, where the ions are removed and the water is reused. The process is reversed to restore the aquifer to its original condition. (This is a simple explanation of the science, but I'm sure you get the idea).

- Since there are Federal Laws that govern the operating standards for uranium mining in ALL states, why did our legislators feel a need to write yet another piece of legislation for Colorado? (See EPA: Class I and Class III Underground Injection Control Permits and the NRC: Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (program authority delegated by NRC to state CDPHE-HMWMD: Radioactive Materials/Uranium Mill License – Besides these Federal Regulations, there are 9 more state and 1 local regulation that must be adhered to before authorization to mine is given).

Frankly, House Bill 1161 is a farce. It's a modern version of the old story, The Emperor's New Clothes, and I thought for sure, someone would stand up and say so, but no one has, so I will. HB1161 is a 'feel good' bill written for two purposes: 1) to fool the good people of Larimer County into thinking that a few legislators did something about uranium mining, and 2) to stir up enough praise for those legislators in hopes that they'll be remembered when it comes time to vote.

Before HB1161, per Federal Law, mining companies had to return the ground water back to its original state (which ironically, when following the standards set in House Bill 1161, will actually do more damage to the environment than good, so watch for HB1161 to be revised in the near future). In fact, the mining companies can and will return, not just the water, but the whole area back to its original state, and while they are 'mining' or pumping the watered down uranium (which at this point is not radioactive) out of the ground in an all encased system, the cows; horses; sheep; whatever that had been grazing on that land can continue to graze on that land without interruption.

The farmers or ranchers who own the surface rights to their land and are allowing mining companies to come in and pump uranium are being compensated. No one is being undermined, swindled, or hoodwinked; no one in the mining area that is. The rest of us, who've allowed the legislators to prey on our fears certainly have been, and honestly, I'm tired of that tactic. I'm tired of being told half-truths, or being used by politicians just to further their personal agendas. So what am I going to do? I'm going to run for the House of Representatives. That may seem like I'm jumping from the frying pan into the fire, but I believe the people of District 53 and the people of Northern Colorado need an honest Representative. Someone who will calm their fears when it comes to important issues, face down those who refuse to do so, and fight for what is right, not necessarily what is easy. So before throwing your treasured vote to the wind this year, hold it close to your heart for awhile. Research the issues. Find the truth! And then decide who the best person is to represent you in Denver, because if Mr. Fischer and our other citizen legislators have pulled the wool over our eyes on this issue, they'll do it again if we give them the chance, whether or not it's an election year. And you know what? We deserve better.

Sincerely,



Donna R. Gallup
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