

We, the Pocahontas County Commission, write today to request your support in stopping the CDC NIOSH Experimental Mine facility from being placed in Mace, WV. We understand and support the need for underground safety research, but the site under consideration is not suitable for this project.

The property is adjacent to Snowshoe Mountain Resort, well known as the largest mid-Atlantic Ski Resort and now internationally recognized as a world class mountain biking destination. The site is in Pocahontas County's pristine highlands where our tourism economy relies on a clean, wild, and scenic environment. The numbers speak. Last year Pocahontas County earned \$113,000,000 in tourism revenue. Almost a million tourists visit Pocahontas County each year. Homeowners and visitors alike enjoy the recreation opportunities offered by nearby Snowshoe and the Monongahela National Forest, the fishing and swimming in the Elk and Tygart Valley River, hunting in the Monongahela National Forest, the scenic vistas, the peace and quiet, and the dark skies.

The facility will be built in the source of the headwaters of two rivers. The headwaters of the Tygart Valley River and the Elk River rise from the Karst limestone formation within which this mine is proposed. Both rivers are trout reproductive waters and trout fishing destinations. The Elk Headwaters system of caves and underground streams is renowned as a speleological destination. A dye trace test of the Elk headwaters conducted in 1976 confirmed a wide area of underground connectivity. The dye trace test confirmed a rare underground connection between the Tygart Valley River and Elk River watersheds, so this facility puts both rivers at risk of contamination or dewatering.

It is inconceivable that an experimental mine with an above ground fire suppression experimental facility be constructed at this location. Mining, even by the CDC, carries high risk of dewatering wells and springs, and pollution from the Fire Foam, oil-based products, and blasting residue. The DEIS states that water will be pumped continually from the facility to the surface during construction and during operation. Flow into and out of the facility will be a direct conduit for chemicals to escape into water moving through the Karst caves and cracks that is the source of drinking water for the surrounding community, and communities downstream. The Tygart Valley River is one of the water sources for the city of Elkins, WV. The Elk River serves drinking water to Charleston. Pollution created by this facility will travel downstream and affect many distant communities. If public water is brought to the site, our constituents should not be forced to pay for it. We currently have clean water available, and this facility will be the reason our constituents need public water.

Route 219 is one of the main conduits for tourists travelling into Pocahontas County from points North and East and for residents travelling to jobs, healthcare, and most other commerce needs for residents of the Snowshoe area. The proposed Mine entrance on Rt. 219 is on a 7% grade with inadequate line of sight from the south for traffic travelling downhill at a high rate of speed toward the mine entrance. During four years of construction, this mountain road will be frustrating at best, and dangerous at worst when a high volume of industrial truck traffic interacts with high volume of tourist traffic, logging trucks, employees, support service trucks travelling to and from Snowshoe.

If this site is approved for construction of the CDC NIOSH Experimental mine our beautiful community will also be compromised by the following issues.

- The project will produce only 12 jobs, most of which will be filled by PhD scientists from outside the area. The project will negatively affect the largest employer in the county, Snowshoe Mountain Resort. The project will put existing job security at risk by making the commute longer

and more dangerous for teachers, healthcare personnel, natural resource professionals, and others who commute daily to the Tygart Valley region and Elkins.

- Light Pollution-The facility will have industrial scale dusk to dawn lights. We currently are known for our dark skies.
- Smoke Plume- The above ground fire suppression facility will burn things like mine belts, creating a dark and smelly smoke plume in a region that recently boasted a marketing campaign highlighting “fresh mountain air”.
- Noise during Construction- Construction will last at least four years. Our community will experience industrial level noise from hundreds of trucks, back up beepers, blasting, heavy equipment for 12 hours per day, Monday – Saturday.

Please find an alternate site for the CDC NIOSH Experimental Mine. The proposed facility is simply inappropriate for this location. Please ask the WV DEP to help find an alternate location for this experimental mine and refuse to fund it in the current proposed location.