



**Curry County
Board of Commissioners**

David Brock Smith,
Commissioner

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September 23rd, 2015

Neil Kornze, National Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Room 5665
Washington D.C. 20240

Jerome Perez, Oregon State Director
Bureau of Land Management
333 S.W. 1st Avenue
Portland OR 97204

Regarding: Mineral withdrawal on 95,806 acres of National Forest System lands on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

As a Commissioner for Curry County and on behalf of our residents, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the critical issue of mineral withdrawal in Southwestern Oregon. On August 7th, 2013, the Curry County Board of Commissioners passed an Amendment to the Curry County Code adding a New Article One, Division Fourteen relating to a Federal Coordination Policy. This Policy, under Section 1.14.010, subsection (1) asserts additional coordination as outlined in the FLPMA and NFMA to, "provide early and frequent opportunities for... local governments to participate in the planning process". The purpose of the Federal Coordination Policy, as outlined in Section 1.14.020, is that Curry County asserts its maximum rights to coordination, as provided by law, with all federal agencies conducting activities in or affecting Curry County and the policies contained in the Federal Coordination Policy are enacted with the express intent of developing meaningful and productive relationships with the federal agencies that coordinate with Curry County.

Section 1.14.030, Subsection (3) outlines the Federal Coordination Policy Mining Policies. The Curry County Board of Commissioners agrees that the proposed project to be conducted by the Red Flat Nickel Corporation will cause serious negative externalities to the project location at the headwaters of the free flowing Hunter Creek and Pistol River watersheds. If allowed to be developed; the board also recognizes there will be serious negative impacts to the surrounding area, restriction of access to popular recreational areas, degradation of the rare and unique botanical resources, as well as the health risks to the residents and wildlife. The Board places higher values on its citizens' health and safety, the many recreational uses of the Red Flat area as well as the highly prized Hunter Creek and Pistol River fisheries for wild chinook and coho salmon, steelhead, cutthroat and resident trout than on the foreign owned Red Flat Mining Corporation interests. Furthermore, the BOC feels this proposed project is not in line with a number of other Curry County policies outlined within the Federal Coordination Policy.

Additionally, the Smith River; which is considered to be the prize of the California Wild and Scenic River System, is included in the proposed mineral withdrawal. While the California portion of the Smith River has the protections of the Smith River National Recreation Area Act and Wild and Scenic designation, the headwaters and North Fork lie in Southwestern Oregon and therefore have no additional protections. The Smith River's free flowing status, large, abundant salmon and steelhead runs and extraordinary botanical diversity, coupled with multiple recreation opportunities and an important source of drinking water for the majority of the residents, make its health vitally important to the safety, welfare and economy of our residents.

We understand that the proposed mineral withdrawal in no way disrupts our citizen's rights to access, recreate and utilize these lands within the proposed area and encourage citizens to do so. We would also encourage the respective federal agencies to fund road infrastructure maintenance programs on the road systems that exist within the proposed area.

In closing, given the critical significance of the Hunter Creek, Pistol River and Smith River Watersheds to the Southwestern Oregon and Northwestern California communities and their economies, Curry County respectfully requests your approval of the proposed mineral withdrawal within the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Respectfully,



David Brock Smith, Commissioner
Curry County Board of Commissioners
District 4 Chair,
Association of Oregon Counties
Association of O&C Counties Board Member

CC: Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Congressman Peter DeFazio
Rob MacWhorter
Patricia Burke