



EAGLE COUNTY

January 29, 2019

Board of County Commissioners

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House Committee on Rural Affairs and Agriculture
200 E Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Chair Dylan Roberts and House Committee on Rural Affairs and Agriculture,

The Eagle County Board of Commissioners strongly values the protection of our county's rivers and streams. We are writing in support of HB 19-1113, which protects water quality during permitting for hard rock mining.

We believe this bill implements best practice by preventing new mining permits that would require perpetual water treatment and eliminating self-bonding for remediation. It will strengthen existing tools to protect water quality throughout Colorado.

In self-bonding, the mine operator's financial statements are taken as proof that the operator has the financial resources to stabilize the site and cover all reclamation and cleanup costs. By the time a mine ceases operations, a company may not be able to pay or afford cleanup, leaving the taxpayers with the responsibility to do so.

Mines that endlessly pollute water sources will no longer be eligible for new or amended permits in Colorado. This bill will create an incentive for companies to design mines that reduce the risks of water pollution and damage to the environment.

If complications arise at mines, this bill limits the risks to taxpayers by allowing the state to collect adequate financial guarantees from companies to ensure that water quality will be protected into the future.

Colorado has more than 24 mines that require long-term, costly water treatment, which pose the greatest risk to taxpayers. One of those mines is in Eagle County, and we have seen first-hand the negative effects of zinc and other heavy metal pollution in the Eagle River.

Please let us know if you need any more information from Eagle County, and thank you for considering our support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Eagle County Board of Commissioners



Jeanne McQueeney

Chair



Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner