



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY VOWS TO WATCH MINING EXPLORATION LIKE A HAWK

SANTA FE, N.M – On April 26th, the NM Mining and Minerals Division (MMD) granted BE Resources Inc., a permit to drill exploration holes on the Sullivan Ranch—just upstream from a community of organic farmers, native peoples and rural families. The Monticello Community Ditch Association has been trying to stop the proposed beryllium project since 2000 and, although disappointed with the MMD’s decision, are in no way deterred in their opposition.

"Issuing this permit does not end the matter for the Monticello Community Ditch Association, concerned citizens from Monticello and downstream communities," stated Joshua Cravens, Secretary of the Association. "We will all still be here, and our stance as stewards who protect this land and water will not end. After all, this canyon is our lifeblood."

The Association, and supporting community members, contested the exploration permit, with the help of the non-profit environmental law firm, the New Mexico Environmental Law Center (NMELC). They complained to the MMD that the proposed project is upstream from their homes and could contaminate the community’s water supply. They also reminded the MMD that BE Resources, Inc., (under various other names) had drilled exploratory holes without a permit and failed to remediate those explorations. "Because of our client's efforts, the MMD added amendments to the exploration permit that require BE Resources, Inc., to employ several environmentally protective measures," said Jonathan Block, Staff Attorney at NMELC and lead counsel on the case.

Cravens noted that, "With the help of the New Mexico Environmental Law Center we were able to get MMD to put some safeguards in place and not be plowed over by their process." He added, "Though we do not feel like the Mining Act sufficiently protected this fragile area that is so dear to so many, we also view this as a partial victory."

The Monticello Community Ditch Association and many local people remain concerned, based upon past experience with MMD and other state agencies, that monitoring BE Resources Inc.’s compliance to the amended permit will be lax. Cravens, however, vowed that the community will be vigilant, saying, "Now it’s our job to make sure that state agencies involved in monitoring the exploration permit do their job of safeguarding the environment--we will be watching to be sure they do."

www.nmelc.org

The mission of the New Mexico Environmental Law Center is to protect New Mexico's natural environment and achieve environmental justice for New Mexico's communities through legal representation, policy advocacy and public education. The New Mexico Environmental Law Center's attorneys have handled over 100 critical cases in low-income and minority communities fighting pollution and environmental degradation. The NMELC charges few, if any, fees to its clients, most of who are from Hispanic and Native American communities. The NMELC celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008. Membership and gifts help New Mexico communities protect their natural environment and their health from toxic pollution, the degrading effects of growth and liabilities created by irresponsible mining. Contact: Sebia Hawkins, Director of Development 505-989-9022, ext. 27.

INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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