

Protect communities & water from toxic mining

Support House Bill 08-1165 Strengthen Mining Reclamation Standards

**Sponsors: Rep. Randy Fischer (D-Ft. Collins), Rep. John Kefalas (D-Ft. Collins),
Sen. Shaffer (D-Ft. Collins) and Sen. Bacon (D-Ft. Collins)**

Hang onto your cowboy hats, the mining boom is back!

Spikes in the price of uranium, gold, and other hardrock minerals have led to a 230% jump in Colorado mining claims in just the last four years. Foreign and domestic mining companies have staked claims across Colorado, affecting lands adjacent to farms and ranches on the Eastern Plains as well as the sportsmen and tourist centers in the Colorado River headwaters and the Dolores River Basin.

Mining can mar landscapes and release toxics and radioactive pollution such as arsenic, lead, selenium, uranium, and zinc. These toxics threaten air and water quality, wildlife, our lands, and our health. The 1992 Summitville mining disaster was Colorado's worst-ever toxic mining spill, killing over 17 miles of the Alamosa River. This one mine has reached more than \$200 million in tax-payer funded clean-up costs and counting. Past uranium mills account for numerous toxic Superfund sites in Colorado.

Now is the time to prepare for the mining boom and promote responsible mining stewardship. We need to ensure that local governments, communities, and the public are included in meaningful way on mining decisions that could have enormous local impacts.

About HOUSE BILL 08-1165

Ensure local governments can protect their communities from toxic mining and avoid another Summitville mining disaster

- Because the use of toxics and chemicals can pose extreme risks to communities, local governments should have the right to protect their communities. Local governments should have the ability to decide whether to allow those mining operations that propose to use or disturb toxic and acidic chemicals. Communities should have the tools to avoid the possibility of another Summitville mining disaster, or the creation of new toxic Superfund sites.
- An ongoing legal battle where both local governments and the mining industry have seen victory and defeat is putting this important power at risk. The state legislature should step-in to ensure local control and the ability of local governments to decide how and where potentially polluting and dangerous mining operations may operate.

Ending the "veil of secrecy" around mining exploration

- Colorado stands alone with its western neighbors by keeping all prospecting information confidential, even when local landowners and the environment could be directly impacted. Coloradans deserve the right-to-know about mine drilling and exploration that could threaten their property and ground water, while protecting truly proprietary mining information, such as drill and well log data.

Ensure better protections of communities, public health, and the environment by making modest reforms of the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board

- With the new mining boom, we need to ensure that Colorado adequately considers and addresses concerns for local communities, public health, and the environment. To do so, we should make modest changes to the Mined Land Reclamation Board by adding two seats – one for local government and one for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). This will provide better balance of diverse viewpoints and ensure that CDPHE can play a greater role in overseeing uranium mining, which poses a unique threat to Colorado's groundwater and waterways.

For more information:

Jeff Parsons, Western Mining Action Project (303) 823-5738

Matt Garrington, Environment Colorado (303) 573-3871 ext. 310