

For immediate release: February 21, 2023

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Conservation Groups Seek Emergency Halt of Destructive Lithium Mine Pending Court Appeal

RENO, Nev. – Conservation groups [filed an emergency motion](#) in federal court today, asking the court to enjoin the development of the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine until their case can be heard on appeal at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Earlier this month, Judge Du ruled that the Bureau of Land Management broke the law in approving the mine, but the court's order didn't halt development of the enormous open pit mine. Today's filing requests that the court block ground disturbance and construction until compliance with federal laws is assured.

"This mine should not be allowed to destroy public land unless and until the Ninth Circuit has determined whether it was legally approved. There's no evidence that Lithium Nevada will be able to establish valid mining claims to lands it plans to bury in waste rock and tailings, but the damage will be done regardless," said Talasi Brooks, staff attorney with Western Watersheds Project.

If the project is not stopped pursuant to the emergency motion, the company has said it will proceed with the blasting of the mine pit, construction of the sulfuric acid processing plant and the development of other facilities that will imminently destroy critical wildlife habitat and public lands. All of these operations will irreparably damage thousands of acres of public land for a project that was illegally approved.

"There is no sustainable way to allow the excavation of a 2.3 mile long open pit that will remove over 17 million tons of rock and ore per year for 41 years." said Kevin Emmerich, Co-Founder of Basin and Range Watch. "The flawed and fast-tracked approval of this mine would inflict long-term damage to a critical sage grouse population, scare off nesting golden eagles and potentially destroy the groundwater resources for an extensive area surrounding the project site. Construction activity should be halted until the Ninth Circuit can review the appeal. "

"This Thacker Pass mine has stirred up a hornet's nest of opposition and become notorious for the environmental damage it will cause. It symbolizes BLM's wrecking ball approach to "green" energy on public lands. We can, and must, do better and act to protect the beauty, biodiversity and sacred places of the West's sagebrush sea. Instead, this huge mine would destroy irreplaceable habitats for sage-grouse, and the nesting sites of long-billed curlew, burrowing owl and many other declining species. It would also rip apart an area of great cultural importance " said Katie Fite WildLands Defense Public Lands Director.

"The permitting of the Thacker Pass mine could set a dangerous precedent by allowing an illegal and inadequately analyzed mine to go forward," said John Hadder, Director of Great Basin Resource Watch. To ensure that all is done to prevent avoidable enormous damage to the Thacker Pass region it is essential that the mine permit is vacated."

Today's court action seeks to stop site preparation activities at Thacker Pass which may begin as early as the end of this month according to the mine's proponents.

