

For immediate release February 7, 2023

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**Court rules the Bureau of Land Management broke the law
in approving Thacker Pass Lithium Mine**

RENO, Nev. – In [yesterday's ruling on the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine project](#), the judge agreed with environmental plaintiffs that the Bureau of Land Management (“Bureau”) violated the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act when it approved Lithium Nevada’s plan to bury 1300 acres of public lands under waste rock. The Bureau was ordered to go back and determine whether the company had valid existing rights under the 1872 Mining Law to occupy the waste dump lands.

The court correctly ruled that the Bureau violated federal public land law by assuming mining claim rights without evidence, which was a fundamental part of the case. The Bureau and the mining corporation will now have to prove that, for the project approval to be legal, the lands to be buried by 1,300 acres of waste dumps contain valuable minerals, which is a very strict test under federal mining laws.

The environmental justice/conservation groups are analyzing the court’s decision and reviewing the various options moving forward, including the right to appeal.

“We don’t know yet what the next steps will be, but we know we won’t stop fighting this destructive mine,” said Greta Anderson, deputy director of Western Watersheds Project. “We need to find truly just and sustainable solutions for the climate crisis, and not by digging ourselves deeper into the biodiversity crisis.”

The Thacker Pass Mine was approved within a sage grouse Priority Habitat Management Area, and the mine stands to dewater aquifers that feed the handful of desert springs inhabited by a rare springsnail – the Kings River pyrg – that is found nowhere else in the world.

“It’s disappointing that the BLM and the Biden Administration can’t see through the greenwashing of a project that will demolish sage grouse habitat, permanently dewater desert springs, imperil rare spring snails, and destroy important cultural sites,” said Katie Fite Wildlands Defense Public Lands Director.

"Our hearts are heavy hearing the decision that Judge Du did not revoke the permits for the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine. Indigenous people's sacred sites should not be at the expense of the climate crisis the US faces. Destroying Peehee Mu'huh is like cultural genocide," said the People of Red Mountain, Indigenous Land and Culture protectors

“Modern mining is very environmentally destructive and disruptive to communities. The Thacker Pass mine would obliterate the habitat at Thacker Pass, contributing to climate change, and wipe out a significant Paiute Shoshone cultural area.” said John Hadder, Director of Great Basin Resource Watch. “It is essential that the citing of mining operations be done carefully,

judiciously, and in a manner that allows for the full range of consequences of the proposed mine to be fully explored and addressed, unlike for the Thacker Pass mine. This is why the federal permit should be illegal and needs to be sent back.”

“The Bureau of Land Management must manage Thacker Pass and connecting mountains to preserve essential sage grouse habitat, old growth sagebrush, golden eagle nests, endemic springsnails and additional wildlife,” said Kevin Emmerich, Co-Founder of Basin and Range Watch. “The unique viewshed and dark skies should be managed to retain the existing character of the landscape. The open pit, waste rock facilities, noise and water use required for the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine all would cause critical damage to a remaining stronghold for local wildlife, and the viewshed will be damaged forever.”

According to Lithium Nevada Corporation’s Plans of Operation, the mine would entail:

- excavation of a large open pit roughly 2.3 miles long by about half a mile at the widest
- removal of up to 17.2 million tons of rock and ore per year
- direct surface disturbance of 5,694 acres (total project size would be 17,933 acres)
- on-site sulfuric acid plant – up to 5,800 tons of acid per day
- ultimately pumping up to 1.7 billion gallons of water per year
- estimated active surface mining for 41 years, and 5 years of reclamation

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