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Nevada County closes San Juan Ridge Mine application (DOCUMENTS)

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According to a news release from the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association, an application for a use permit to reopen the San Juan Ridge Mine in rural Nevada County has been closed.

In a March 14, 2016 letter to Timothy Callaway, CEO of the San Juan Mining Corporation (SJMC), Nevada County Planning Department Planning Director Brian Foss wrote, "... the Use Permit and Reclamation Plan applications are now closed ... If you wish to pursue the project in the future a new application will be required and new application fees and materials will be required to be submitted."

According to the release, the application, submitted in February 2012 by SJMC, had drawn widespread attention throughout Nevada County and beyond, primarily as a result of impacts to neighboring wells caused by a catastrophic dewatering event by the same mining operation in the 1990s. Led by the opposition of the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association (SJRTA) and community members to the reopening of the mine, the effort to question the potential impacts of the mine on the surrounding community and watershed was joined by local nonprofits South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) and The Sierra Fund.

The County Planning Department required a rigorous year-long well monitoring plan through the environmental review process, but after only six months of collecting water quality and quantity data, the mine operator halted monitoring in March 2014. The release states that in a letter dated December 15, 2015, the Planning Department notified Mr. Callaway that he had until March 1 to meet and discuss reinstating the monitoring program, or have the permit application dismissed.

"After the stress and trauma experienced due to the impact on wells in the 1990s, the community has been staunchly opposed to the reopening of this mine, and can now heave a sigh of relief," SJRTA President Sol Henson stated in the release. "It's been a long process and we're pleased that community concern and good science was used by the County to help insure protection of our water supply. Our organization has been looking at economically viable alternative uses of the property that would fit in with the needs of the surrounding population, and, it is hoped, satisfy the property owners."

SYRCL Executive Director Caleb Dardick said in the release, "SYRCL is delighted by the County's closure of this application. When the mine last operated, it discharged millions of gallons of water — some of it untreated mine waste — into a tributary of the South Yuba River, scouring the creek bed down to bedrock, and endangering the habitat of yellow-legged frogs and other sensitive species. Mercury was historically used on the mining site and significant quantities may still be present and could re-enter local waterways via discharged water. By taking this action, the County is removing a substantial threat to the habitat of our beloved Yuba River watershed."

According to the release, dozens of individuals and representatives came forward during the environmental review process to express their concerns including Twin Ridges Elementary School District, Sierra Family Medical Clinic, Expanding Light Retreat at Ananda Village, Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, Sutter County Superintendent of Schools, CLAIM-GV and state and federal agencies.

[San Juan Mine U12-001 RP12-001](#)



**COUNTY OF NEVADA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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Sean Powers
Community Development Agency Director

Brian Foss
Planning Director

March 14, 2016

San Juan Mining Corporation
Tim Callaway President/CEO
PO Box 1945
Nevada City CA 95959

RE: San Juan Mine – Use Permit Application (U12-001) and Reclamation Plan (RP12-001)

Dear Mr. Callaway:

The Nevada County Planning Department received your letter dated August 25, 2015 which requested that the application for the San Juan Ridge Gold Mine be put on hold for a period of six months beginning on September 1, 2015 and requested written explanation of the groundwater monitoring requirements to establish the baseline conditions for the project site. A letter dated December 15, 2015 was sent to you from the County granting the six month extension and responding to groundwater monitoring questions.

The County's letter stated that unless you had contacted the Planning Department by March 1, 2016 to set a meeting and develop a strategy/schedule for gathering baseline data we would consider the Use Permit (U12-001) and Reclamation Plan (RP12-001) applications withdrawn and close the applications. As of this date, no response has been received and no contact has been made with County staff by your team. Therefore, the Use Permit and Reclamation Plan applications are now closed. We will refund any unused portion of the application fees and any unused monies from the EIR contract.

If you wish to pursue the project in the future a new application will be required and new application fees and materials will be required to be submitted.

Please contact me if you have any questions at (530) 265-1256.

Sincerely,


Brian Foss, Planning Director
Nevada County Planning Department

CC: Hank Weston, 4th District Supervisor
Alison Barratt-Green, County Counsel
Tod Herman, Associate Planner
Patrick Hindmarsh, Michael Baker International