

**Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment • Amigos Bravos  
• New Mexico Environmental Law Center**

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Mt. Taylor Mine Hearing Set for December 4<sup>th</sup>  
*State to decide whether zombie uranium mine can continue to avoid clean up*

Contacts: Susan Gordon coordinator, MASE, 505-577-8438, [susangordon@earthlink.net](mailto:susangordon@earthlink.net)  
Eric Jantz, staff attorney, NM Environmental Law Center, 505-989-9022, [ejantz@nmelc.org](mailto:ejantz@nmelc.org)  
Rachel Conn, Interim Executive Director, Amigos Bravos, 575-770-832, [rconn@amigosbravos.org](mailto:rconn@amigosbravos.org)

On December 4, the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division will hold a public hearing to seek input about whether Rio Grande Resources' (RGR) Mt. Taylor Mine can move from standby to active status. Mt. Taylor Mine has been on standby status polluting the surrounding environment for the last 15 years.

The Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) and Amigos Bravos will present testimony on the impacts from pollution to our communities from the Mt. Taylor Mine and the failure of RGR to conduct interim reclamation. MASE and Amigos Bravos, represented by New Mexico Environmental Law Center, will also challenge RGR's unreasonable predictions of the economic viability of the mine in the face of a continued depressed international uranium market. There will be an opportunity for public testimony.

A subsidiary of General Atomics, RGR's Mt. Taylor Mine has not produced an ounce of uranium since 1990. The operator has repeatedly received standby permits since the passage of New Mexico's Mining Act. The mine quit producing after only 8 years of operation, leaving the infrastructure and waste piles sitting unreclaimed for over 15 years. The NM Mining and Minerals Division repeatedly approved standby permits for the mine despite documented groundwater contamination and no prospects for renewed production. Now the mine is requesting to move to active status. When the mine is in active or standby status reclamation requirements are put on hold.

"Mt. Taylor is a zombie mine," said Susan Gordon, coordinator for MASE. "It's neither producing uranium nor is it cleaning up its existing mess - it's festering in the community. This is simply a ploy by RGR to avoid having to start reclamation. The NM Mining and Mineral Department should do its job and require reclamation of all uranium mine sites in New Mexico."

"The New Mexico Mining Act assumes that when a mining company says it will start mining, it will do so within a reasonable time period," said Eric Jantz, staff attorney at the New Mexico Environmental Law Center. "But the economics the company is putting forward just don't make sense. Every credible source indicates that current uranium production will satisfy demand for years to come. This mine will not produce uranium anytime soon, so RGR should start creating jobs right now by starting reclamation."

"RGR has avoided cleaning up its mess for long enough," said Rachel Conn, Interim Executive Director for Amigos Bravos. "To protect groundwater for future generations and create jobs now the state must require RGR to start reclamation immediately."

The Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment is a network of groups located in the Grants Mining Belt of northwestern New Mexico that works collaboratively to stop new uranium mines and cleanup wastes. [www.masecoalition.org](http://www.masecoalition.org)

Amigos Bravos is a statewide water advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the waters of New Mexico. [www.amigosbravos.org](http://www.amigosbravos.org)

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