



La Plata County
Colorado

Board of County Commissioners

Gwen Lachelt, Chair • Bradford P. Blake, Vice Chair • Julie Westendorff, Commissioner

1101 East 2nd Ave
Durango, CO 81301
970/382-6219

March 23, 2018

The Honorable Representative Dylan Roberts
200 E Colfax, RM 307
Denver, CO 80203

Subject: Support for Safeguarding Water Quality during Hardrock Mining Reclamation

Dear Representative Roberts:

The La Plata County Board of County Commissioners supports the goals of House Bill 18-1301: Safeguarding Water Quality during Hardrock Mining Reclamation. Protecting of water quality and rivers that may be impacted from hardrock mining runoff is a vital interest for all areas of Colorado where hardrock mining might occur. As a county that was heavily impacted by, and is still seeing the effects of, the Gold King Mine Spill, La Plata County is particularly concerned about implications of unaddressed acid mine drainage to our watershed.

This bill works to:

1. Ensure that water quality treatment does not go on in perpetuity, where avoidable.
2. Ensure that water quality protection is included in the bond calculation. Doing so would avoid taxpayers having to fund sites not reclaimed by the mine operator and owner.
3. Ensure that all bonds are backed by recoverable assets (no self-bonding). Self-bonding creates the potential for the mine operator and owner to not complete reclamation and burdening taxpayers with the clean-up.

We hope that the legislation does not create an effective moratorium on hardrock mining given the importance of such minerals to technology and our national economy.

On behalf of the citizens of La Plata County, we thank you for your consideration and your advocacy of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

LA PLATA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Gwen Lachelt
Chair (abstained)

Bradford P. Blake
Vice-Chair

Julie Westendorff
Commissioner

Cc: Joanne Spina, La Plata County Manager
Sheryl Rogers, La Plata County Attorney