

WHAT MONTANA NEWSPAPERS HAVE SAID ABOUT CYANIDE

Excerpts from editorials about the ban on cyanide heap-leach mining

EXHIBIT 19
DATE 3/23/11
SB 306

LOOK AT FACTS

“Concerns about the process go beyond cyanide itself to the fact that leach processing of low-grade gold ore requires pulverizing many tons of rock to get a single ounce of gold. There's a large amount of what a state regulator recently called ‘environmentally complex’ reclamation required.”

“It's time for Montanans to move forward toward more responsible use and development of natural resources. Let's not go back to the failed processes of the past.”

– **Billings Gazette**, October 27, 2004

PART OF 'NO' THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND

“We cherish our water and fisheries and all they support. We also dislike rehashing old business; Montana's future is ahead of us, not behind us. ... Experience shows that the large-scale use of cyanide in mining not only poses a threat to our water and fisheries, but it's also a threat to our pocketbooks. Taxpayers have been saddled with much of the cost of cleaning up the messes.”

– **Missoulian**, March 8, 2004

ANOTHER CYANIDE-MINE VOTE?

“Voters approved I-137 — an outright ban on all new surface gold and silver mines using the cyanide process — by a 52 percent to 48 percent margin in 1998. An effort to repeal it was rejected by the 1999 Legislature. ... The arguments have changed little in the intervening years.”

– **Helena Independent Record**, Feb. 23, 2003

VOTERS GOT IT RIGHT IN 1998 ON CYANIDE MINING BAN

“The history of cyanide heap-leach gold mining in Montana has not been good. Failed mining companies have left surface and groundwater contaminated with cyanide near Pony and in the Little Rockies in northcentral Montana. And there are other cases where cyanide from mining leached into groundwater contaminating residential water wells. Inadequate bonding demanded by state regulatory agencies left taxpayers with millions of dollars in cleanup bills for some of these problems Montana voters quite sensibly recognized these issues when they approved I-137 in 1998, and there is no real compelling reason to repeal it.”

– **Bozeman Daily Chronicle**, April 20, 2004

CYANIDE, NO

“Montanans passed an initiative in 1998 that banned new cyanide-leach open-pit mines, and nothing has changed since then, including the grim track record of leaks and other problems with the cyanide-leach process. Montanans already have voted to allow only responsible mining in their state, and they should stick to their guns.”

– **Helena Independent Record**, October 27, 2004

LAWMAKERS SHOULD HONOR VOTER-APPROVED INITIATIVES

“This mining method resulted in the expensive and still incomplete cleanup of the Zortman-Landusky gold mine. ... The people spoke. Many state leaders weren't listening. Voters may well have a new message for these officeholders”

– **Billings Gazette**, February 22, 2003

FORCING NEW VOTE INVITES BACKLASH

“Montanans voted in defense of clean water, fisheries and their own pocketbooks when they banned cyanide heap-leaching. ... Cyanide leaching is a 19th-century technology that's gotten bigger, but not better with time. The mining industry doesn't exactly have a lot of successful mines employing cyanide processing to hold up as good examples. There are, however, plenty of examples of serious pollution and huge, taxpayer-borne cleanup costs from these mines.”

“A bigger concern should be the contempt that legislators, primarily majority Republicans, are displaying for the will of voters. ... Lawmakers may simply be hard of hearing when it comes to voters, but they risk coming off as arrogant. This contributes to a broader mistrust of the Legislature, making problem-solving on an array of issues harder.”

– **Missoulian**, March 11, 2003

PEOPLE'S BAN ON CYANIDE SHOULD STAND

“There is no good reason to lift the ban on cyanide mining. Among the many environmental regulations this Legislature is considering altering or streamlining, cyanide mining has the least merit. Let's support responsible development and reclamation rules. Let the people's ban on cyanide stand.”

– **Billings Gazette**, March 4, 2003

TIME TO CHOOSE CANDIDATES, BALLOT ISSUES

“There's no new technology ... to overcome the environmental problems posed by cyanide leach gold mining – costly problems that persuaded Montanans to ban the process in 1998.”

– **Billings Gazette**, October 30, 2004

WE ALL PAY FOR MESSY PRACTICES OF MINING

“Overturned earth is piled sky-high while noisy trucks and loaders shoulder the burden of hauling precious minerals or fuel to rail cars or processing mills. Diesel fumes fill the air as huge trenches and pits are dug. In some cases, water is mixed with cyanide so that gold can be leached from the ore. The workers who make their living extracting coal, precious minerals or metals will tell you it can be hard, sometimes dangerous, work. They would be the first to admit that pulling minerals out of a mountain is not a tidy undertaking.

It s messy. But mining can turn from messy to ugly in a hurry. Montana has been victim to the rape-and-run mentality before. The dredge piles can still be seen along creek beds stripped bare in the late 1800s near Virginia City. And hard feelings still remain for many folks who saw what greed did to the natural and social landscapes when the copper barons left Butte to die. Boom-and-bust industries provide only temporary jobs and leave a damaged landscape in their wakes.”

– **Billings Gazette**, December 6, 2000

I-137 SUIT'S CHANCES ARE POOR

“Montana abounds with instances in which cyanide has in fact leaked, mine clean-ups have been slow and unsatisfactory, and reclamation bonds have been woefully inadequate. Voters can't be accused of mindlessly swallowing some environmentalist line; they simply were letting history be their guide.”

– **Helena Independent Record**, April 29, 2001

MONTANANS ARE SERIOUS ABOUT CYANIDE BAN

“Before the lead in the voters' pencils had cooled post-Election Day 1998, mining interests were telling Montanans they didn't know what they were doing. ... Since then, an unending string of attempts to undermine or do an end run around the law have brought about a feeling of the movie ‘Groundhog Day,’ in which one day is repeated over and over and over. ... Montana voters meant what they said. And they'd say it again, reaffirming their dedication to clean water.”

– **Missoulian**, October 30, 2003