Statement of Robert C. Sisson
Owner of 15101 Eagle Eye Way, Gallatin Gateway, MT

My wife and I are the owners of nearly 11 acres located at 15101 Eagle Eye Way, Gallatin Gateway, Montana. The parcel is located in Hillside Tracts, a development of similar lots on the summit of Hawk Hill, a feature that rises approximately 400 feet above the Gallatin Valley. It is located between Gallatin Gateway and the north mouth of the Gallatin Canyon, with spectacular views of the Spanish Peaks, Gallatin Range, Tobacco Roots, Madison Range, and Bridger Mountains.

Hawk Hill is on the east side of US-191, directly opposite of the TMC-Black mine site.

We have been attempting to sell this land for two years. A few months before the TMC-Black Gravel mine permit application was made public, we had signed a buy/sell agreement with Jenny Turner, Ted Turner’s youngest daughter, for the price of $900,000. Unfortunately, the day before our scheduled closing, Ms. Turner found a larger parcel with a sales price over $2 million that was adjacent to her father’s Flying D Ranch. She chose to forfeit her earnest deposit with us in order to purchase the property adjacent to her father’s ranch.

Later, just one day before the MDEQ notices announcing the TMC Black permit application landed in the mailboxes of our neighbors (we were not notified because we were just outside the one-half mile radius and because the lot is unimproved), a member of the Black family called our real estate agent and made a low-ball offer for our lot. He told our agent, “I won’t pay more than that because I know of some stuff happening below that will affect the value of the land.”

Completely unaware of the proposed mine, we turned down the offer.

Once the gravel pit permit application was made public, all interest in the land disappeared, including three potential buyers who had been in contact with our agent. Finally, last week, we signed a sales agreement in the amount of $650,000.

The fair market value of the land, prior to knowledge of the gravel mine, was established at $900,000 by virtue of the bona fide offer we had received. Thus, the gravel mine directly impacted our personal financial situation (our net worth) by decreasing it $250,000.

By fact, and by admission of a member of the Black family, the gravel mine absolutely impacts the value of land and homes nearby. From out lot, it is barely possible to even see the mine site—yet, we’ve lost $250,000 thanks to the lack of protections afforded Montana citizens by HB 599.