

STATE OF  
COLORADO

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## Zephyr minerals Fremont County

1 message

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**P Colgate** <pcolgate1a@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 11:28 PM

To: tim.cazier@state.co.us

While there isn't time or digital space to address all the issues that exist with the planned Zephyr project, there are a few key points I would like to bring up.

### Transparency

The primary comment period on the proposed mining exploration south of Canon City has passed. However, many people would still like to comment on this project. Many also feel like the application and permitting process were "slipped in" on citizens, with very little announcement, and little to no advance warning on the comment period.

Unfortunately, this has been true of Zephyr operations since they first turned their attention to Fremont County. They have not been transparent at any stage of this project. This is the first area of concern regarding this project.

### Scale of Production

A second concern is more specific. While it is repeatedly stated that the exploration will "only" be from a few wooden platforms, on a limited number of acres, with little ground disturbance, this is false and misleading. It suggests a "little" project of minor significance. But this is just "spin doctoring". For example, elsewhere in the forms it is stated that the lease will at some point provide \$50,000 in royalties. At the same time in another area it states that royalties will not exceed 2%. Simple math says that this means production will be 2.5 million. This cannot be achieved with a few platforms on a few acres. This implies a massive amount of production. This dry, fragile environment cannot withstand this level of production.

### Water Resources

A third specific concern involves the method of exploration, which includes "fluid injection". This is bad for Colorado environments first because water is a scarce resource. The Upper Arkansas Conservancy may have leased water to Zephyr, but money talks and the Conservancy district is not directly affected by water being taken from Grape Creek. Agricultural producers in the Canon City area are. We have been in a drought cycle for several years and by mid to late summer, water levels are so low in Grape Creek that there is not enough water for area irrigation ditches. Typically, water calls are put in affect going back to the oldest rights in the 1850's and 60's. We cannot spare water for a foreign entity to make a profit, non of which benefits Fremont county.

### Sub-Surface Resources

Further, and perhaps more critical, the water injection exploration is bad for the immediate area because the fluid typically used in mining extraction is not plain water; it is a combination of chemicals, many of which are highly toxic and even carcinogenic. The aquifers that supply all the wells and springs in South Canon and the surrounding vicinity are under the land that is being leased to Zephyr. The officials in charge of mining leases for the BLM, USFS and other agencies don't care if benzene ends up in a well or spring somewhere distant from them, but I can assure you that as a well user in Fremont county, I do care.

This same exploration is again presented in a false and misleading way, with statements that all work will be done "under ground" and not disturb the surface. The resources that area underground, namely fragile aquifers, are just as important as surface ones.

### Impacts Beyond the Direct and Obvious

Another underground concern involves fault lines which run under the Arkansas itself and the Grape Creek drainage. Underground exploration, especially involving "fluid injection" is highly risky to these faults and raises the real potential for tremors in the areas south of the Arkansas river that can damage homes and businesses.

### Long Term Operations

Lastly, another concern involves Zephyr itself. Besides the fact that it is a non-U.S. company, exploiting areas of our country with less ability to buffer themselves from the harm done by such exploitative industries, Zephyr is in large part a speculation company. Whatever promises they may make, they do have the option to sub-contract work out to whomever makes the best deal for them. Various clauses in the lease put some limitations to this, but some form of sub-leasing is not prohibited. The lease allows for specific terms up to 20 years, and vague terms encompassing time-frames measured in such fluid was as "as long as the operations are productive". It is poor business practice in any industry, and sheer negligence in this case, to grant leases for such long, and with such vague, open-ended terms of effect.

In summary, I realize that it is probably a "done deal" by now, and public comments are largely for forms sake, having little impact on any decisions, but if you have any concern for public lands, and the public affected by use of those lands, we certainly hope you reconsider this lease.

Thank you,

Peggy Colgate  
Canon City CO

