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**Board of County
Commissioners
Nye County, Nevada**

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January 3, 2024

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Mr. Jon Raby
Nevada State Director
Bureau of Land Management
BLM Nevada State Office
1340 Financial Blvd.
Reno, Nevada 89502

Subject: Mining operations along the boundary of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and the Ash Meadows Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Dear Director Raby,

The Nye County Board of County Commissioners (Board) wishes to express their opposition to exploratory drilling and mining operations near the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and the Ash Meadows ACEC. This area is a refuge consisting of a network of natural springs fed by the Amargosa River. These springs are an oasis in one of the hottest, driest places on earth. This habitat area is home to more than 25 rare plants and animal species that exist nowhere else on the planet, some of which are protected under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered.

Multiple mining claims are located right on the boundary of the Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge and the Ash Meadows ACEC. This is a known ecologically sensitive area and a critical habitat for the endangered Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish and Ash Meadows Speckled Dace. Allowing exploratory drilling and mining operations may alter crucial ground water flows with the risk of dewatering, causing irretrievable damage to the aquifer.

The Board believes it is unwise to allow mining projects to move forward so close to a critical habitat. Fairbanks Spring is located near many of the mining claims and is home to the above-mentioned Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish and Speckled Dace. Should these projects continue, it is the first step towards mining development.

An Administrative or Congressional Mineral Withdrawal will provide long-term protection and certainty of the Refuge's status and demonstrate our Federal Leadership's commitment to the environment by hearing and acting on their constituents' concerns. It will also provide potential developers with a clear message and direction about future project location sites; saving time and money and resulting in a lower cost to the end users of their products.

Our board voted unanimously to approve this letter on the 3rd day of January 2024.

Should you have any questions about our position or need additional information, support, or assistance, please contact the Natural Resources and Federal Facilities Director, Megan Labadie, at (775) 751-4355 or via e-mail at mrlabadie@nyecountynv.gov.

Nye County Comments regarding Rover Metals exploratory drilling for lithium along the boundary of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

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Sincerely,



Debra Strickland, Chair
Nye County Board of Commissioners

CC: Debra Haaland, Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Washington, D.C. 20240

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