

Cyanide in Our Streams?

Montanans Already Voted No – TWICE.

SB 306 expands cyanide heap leach processing in Montana, encouraging development of many new open-pit mines. The result? **More messes for taxpayers to clean up.**

SB 306 aims to overturn voters' clear choice:

- In 1998, Montanans voted to approve I-137, a ban on new open-pit cyanide heap leach mines.
- In 2004, 57% of voters rejected I-147—the mining industry's attempt to overturn the ban—upholding the ban to protect our streams, drinking water, wildlife, and natural resources.

Now, SB 306 aims to side-step Montanans' decision. This bill is sponsored by Senator Murphy at the request of the Montana Mining Association. It allows existing cyanide heap leach facilities grandfathered in before the ban to process ore from new mines. It might make sense to allow existing cyanide heap leach facilities to process tailings from abandoned or already-existing mine sites. The hauling impacts would be minimal, and it would consolidate old tailings in fewer locations.

However, as currently written, SB 306 goes too far. It would lead to:

- Out-of-state investors **pursuing large-scale gold mining, such as in the headwaters of Rock Creek**, a blue-ribbon trout stream that generates millions in recreation dollars annually. Atlanta-based Dutch Gold Resources has said they plan to dig ore from Rock Creek area and then ship it for processing—this bill enables them to do just that.
- A proliferation of **new open-pit mines scattered across our mountains and floodplains**, potentially saddling taxpayers with the bill for cleaning up the messes when reclamation bonds aren't sufficient.
- **Thousands of mega-loads of truck traffic** on windy, scenic highways, carrying thousands of tons of earth to far-flung processing plants where toxic cyanide is leached into the ore. With gold at record-high prices, it pencils out for corporations or small miners to dig open pit mines and then truck ore for cyanide heap leach processing.
- Cyanide processing **threatens our streams and groundwater**, and significantly increasing processing at existing sites leaves too much room for leaks and spills.
- Past cyanide processing mistakes at Zortman-Landusky and Beal Mountain cost Montanans hundreds of millions of dollars in cleanup fees, not to mention a **huge loss in property value and fish and wildlife resources at these now-toxic sites.**

It's not worth the risk to our clean water. VOTE NO ON SB 306.