

# PROTECT CONGLOMERATE MESA

## SUBMIT YOUR COMMENT TO SAVE DEATH VALLEY'S DOORSTEP

### Make Your Voice Heard!

A public comment period is OPEN for K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metal's exploratory drilling at Conglomerate Mesa. They are proposing miles of new road construction and 120 drill holes, spanning 12.1 acres of ancestral tribal lands, cultural resources, scenic landscapes, and threatened habitat. Read below to learn how to submit your public comment **before August 30th** to protect Conglomerate Mesa from this destructive mining project.

### Tips For Making Effective Comments

Make it personal! Share your story of personal connection to these lands and why you want the area to be protected. Here is a sample letter - please personalize it and make it your own:

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a resident of [your city] and I strongly oppose K2 Gold's exploratory drilling project at Conglomerate Mesa. This region is special to me because [insert your special connection to this place, your favorite memories here, etc. - no limit on how much you write! Some examples:

- Conglomerate Mesa is the traditional homelands of the Timbisha Shoshone and Paiute Shoshone Tribal Nations. This area is an important area for pinyon nut harvesting and is one of the many blending zones of transitional territories. Numerous leaders in local tribes have opposed the gold exploration and mining by K2 Gold. I stand united with the Indigenous people in this opposition.
- Conglomerate Mesa is designated as California Desert National Conservation Lands, and these lands are managed to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant ecological, cultural, and scientific values. Mining Conglomerate Mesa would go directly against the intended management of this landscape.
- Conglomerate Mesa is teeming with rare desert plants as the landscape transitions from the badlands of Death Valley, through the Mojave Desert and into the high Inyo Mountains. Many populations of rare and special-status plants that have been documented here could be adversely impacted by proposed drilling and road construction. Any exploratory drilling and road construction would significantly threaten this botanic oasis.
- I love to [placeholder for your favorite recreational activities here - i.e. hike, camp, hunt, and stargaze] at Conglomerate Mesa. Outdoor recreation is the economic engine of the Eastern Sierra, where local businesses are highly dependent on tourism-based revenue. Mining operations will scar the land and degrade Inyo County's reputation as a scenic, outdoor recreation destination.

It's critical that the Bureau of Land Management stops this project from going any further.

Thank you,

[Your Name]

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## Where to Submit Your Comment:

Pull up a Word document or Google document on your computer and write comments about Conglomerate Mesa. When complete, submit your public comments [here](#) (click “participate now”). You can also email your comments to [BLM\\_ca\\_ri\\_mojavePmetals@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ca_ri_mojavePmetals@blm.gov) (include “Mojave Project Scoping” in the subject line) or mail them to:

Attn: Mojave Project

BLM Ridgecrest Field Office

300 S. Richmond Rd.

Ridgecrest, CA 93555

## What is Public Scoping?

The Bureau of Land Management’s public scoping period serves to include ALL stakeholders and interested public in decision-making concerning the proposed mining activities at Conglomerate Mesa, as part of the agency’s environmental review process. By submitting your comment, this is an opportunity to make your voice heard about the importance of protecting Conglomerate Mesa from the proposed mining activities.

## Comments Due by August 30th, 2021

*Scroll down for talking points and background information to help inform your comment letter.*



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## Sample Talking Points for Comment Letters

**National Conservation Lands:** Established in 2016, Conglomerate Mesa is part of the California Desert National Conservation Lands which directs BLM to manage them for conservation and recreation. Most development, such as renewable energy, is closed on National Conservation Lands. Although the 1872 Mining Law allows for mining, even the early stages of exploration, go directly against the intended management of this landscape.

**Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC):** A large portion of K2 Gold's mining activity falls within an Area of Critical Environmental Concern that is meant to provide protection to cultural resources, rare plant and animal species, and wildlife habitat. Conglomerate Mesa ACEC provides an opportunity to research the role Cerro Gordo played in the Owens Valley resource wars, answer questions about the ethnicity of charcoal makers, and allow for the examination of the prehistoric and historic lifeways of the Native American people who used this area. The Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa ACEC also includes unique plant assemblages, since it lies at the eastern edge of the Mojave Desert and the western edge of the

**Outstanding Botanical Values:** Conglomerate Mesa is teeming with rare desert plants as the landscape transitions from the badlands of Death Valley, through the Mojave Desert and into the high Inyo Mountains. Many populations of rare and special-status plants that have been documented here could be adversely impacted by proposed drilling and road construction. Several rare species, such as Parry's monkeyflower and Shockley's pricklyleaf, reach the edge of their range near the project area. Any exploratory drilling and road construction would significantly threaten this botanic oasis. Of particular concern are the Inyo rock daisy (known only from the Inyo Mountains) and healthy, reproducing stands of the iconic Joshua Tree (currently a candidate for listing under California's Endangered Species Act). The Badger Flat thread plant, a rare species that is new to science, grows right in the middle of the proposed road footprint. Proposed drilling and road construction pose a significant threat to Conglomerate Mesa's rare plants and the intact ecosystem of which they are a part.

**Geologic Resources:** Conglomerate Mesa provides an unusually complete record that is key to unraveling the evolution of the continental edge of the southwestern US. This record would be destroyed forever by open-pit mining and cannot be made right through backfilling or reclamation. The record dates all the way back to the Permian and early Triassic periods (c. 247-300 million years ago). Several strata contain fossils (fusulinids, a type of plankton with calcite casings, and corals) that accurately date them. Some of the fusulinids are endemic to the Conglomerate Mesa area.

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**Cultural Resources:** Conglomerate Mesa is the traditional homelands of the Timbisha Shoshone and Paiute Shoshone people. This area is an important area for pinyon nut harvesting, hunting, and is one of the many blending zones of transitional territories. Numerous leaders in local tribes have opposed the gold exploration and mining by K2 Gold. We stand united with the Indigenous people in this opposition.

**Preserving Our History:** Conglomerate Mesa is rich in heritage resources, including the historic Keeler-Death Valley Trail, which transported mining supplies and workers. The Mesa is a little known and underappreciated location for charcoal production and stone masonry sites active in the 1890's. These small groups of charcoliers would produce charcoal from pinyon trees and haul them north to the Cerro Gordo mines, which helped produce the silver that financed the construction of Los Angeles. These special sites and their stories must be preserved.

**Wildlife:** Conglomerate Mesa is commonly used by mule deer for overwintering and migration habitat. This area is prized by backcountry hunters. The area provides a home for a variety of rare wildlife and are hunting grounds for golden eagles and mountain lions. The area is also known to provide habitat for special status species, such as the Townsend's western big-eared bat and Desert big-horned sheep, and mule deer. Few wildlife surveys have taken place at Conglomerate Mesa and more work is currently being done to research what wildlife live in these high desert habitats.

**Recreation:** Outdoor recreation is the economic engine of the Eastern Sierra, where local businesses are highly dependent on tourism-based revenue. The thousands of people who visit and recreate in Death Valley National Park, Conglomerate Mesa, and other surrounding public lands are the most powerful economic driver for the region. Mining operations severely limit public access, permanently scar lands, and drive visitors away.



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