ARLEE GRAVEL PIT
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Contact reporter Laura Lundquist at commerce.”

"If the DEQ can't mandate mitigation on environmental effects, Coefield said, "then political arguments might be strong enough to help other communities by dismantling HB 599."

Coefield was one of about a dozen who testified on Feb. 20 in support of Bishop's bill but he had carried HB 599 two years ago.

The residents didn't have a few environmental safeguards that DEQ would have provided in a permit for the gravel pit at the end of White Coyote Road, and they had only 30 days to respond to DEQ's proposal.

On Monday, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality issued an open-cut mining permit to Missoula-based Riverside Contracting Inc. to develop a 157-acre gravel pit and asphalt plant on a 335-acre parcel of land east of Missoula on White Coyote Road.

Realizing what they were up against, locals founded Friends of the Jocko to coordinate their grassroots opposition and reach out to Lake County commissioners to see if it was possible to impose environmental safeguards on the mine, which is located 15 miles east of Missoula.