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Jefferson County residents pack hearing to voice concerns for proposed warehouse development

The warehouse would be built on the site of several former mining research labs. Residents worry the site is contaminated and could release harmful toxins into nearby waterways.



Residents opposed to a proposed development that would be built on former mining research labs packed the hearing room at the Jefferson County Government Center on Wednesday.




By: Adria Iraheta

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GOLDEN, Colo. — Residents opposed to a [proposed development that would be built on former mining research labs](#) packed the hearing room at the Jefferson County Government Center on Wednesday.

"The community has turned out in droves to hear what exactly is happening on this heavily contaminated brownfield site," said Jefferson County resident Anne Laffoon.

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The Golden Technology Center is a proposed 500,000-square-foot warehouse and office space that would be built on the site of several old mining research labs. Records show the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversaw a multi-million dollar cleanup on the site in the late 1990s. However, neighbors worry that digging up the land could release harmful toxins.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) determined there was no risk when the development was proposed in 2022, but residents aren't convinced.

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Hundreds of residents against the development voiced those concerns to the Jefferson County Board of Adjustment on Wednesday. At one point, an overflow room had to be used to accommodate the large turnout.

Each speaker was given 10 minutes to speak in front of the board. One of those speakers was 13-year-old climate activist Madhvi Chittoor.

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"I carried an advanced scintillation detector device with a spectrometer and walked around the area and noticed higher levels of radiation near the canal and at Hyatt Lake," she told the Board of Adjustment.

Chittoor has taken it upon herself to gather her own research on current radiation levels near the 40-acre site.

"I've been doing it as much as I can, and it's been pretty consistent," she told Denver7. "I saw higher radiation showing there. Nine clicks per second versus like five clicks per second somewhere else."

Those numbers alarmed Board of Adjustment members.

"I'm a little bit concerned that you walked around with a scintillometer and found elevated readings," said board member Paul Warbington.



Jefferson Co. group opposes development on site of former mining research labs

Neighbors are taking the concern as a sign that their leaders are listening.

"Certainly, we're all here to protect our communities, right?" said Board Chairman Ryan Lester.

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"We're very hopeful that the Board of Adjustment is asking so many detailed questions about exactly what has been tested, what has been mitigated," said Laffoon.

In the meantime, Jefferson County said the site development plan for the property remains under review.

"I believe this is actually providing some good communication for people involved so that they actually... consider their citizens," said Jefferson County resident Sarah Cowan.

Due to the sheer number of residents signed up to speak, the Board of Adjustment extended the hearing to a second day. It will continue Monday, March 10, at the Jefferson County Government Center.

