

In 2017, the Government of Serbia signed a Memorandum on the development of lithium and boron deposits in the villages of Jadra, Brezjak, Slatina, Stupica and Nedeljica, with the company Rio Tinto, which has been researching the area since 2004. According to experts, the project of opening the “Jadar” mine should satisfy about ten percent of the world’s needs for lithium, which would be used for batteries for electric cars. According to the media, the company Rio Tinto is working with domestic and international experts on the development of technology for processing this ore, which is called jadarite by place of origin.

Environmental movements will not stop fighting against the opening of the lithium mine near Loznica, because the research has already caused damage to the environment, said the representative of the association “Let’s protect Jadar and Radjevina”, Marija Alimpic. She told Beta that the opening of the mine would cause an ecological catastrophe because the wells, made during the research, also show damage to the plant world, and it is suspected that the water is also polluted.

“From the numerous wells that were made during the research, some liquid substance is leaking and there are no plants around them,” said Alimpic.

She added that, according to unofficial information, the Public Health Institute in Sabac recommended that the research be suspended in 2013. Alimpic said that the villagers started getting decisions on the conversion of land from agricultural to construction, without asking for them, so it is assumed that the land will be covered by expropriation for the purpose of opening a mine that will cover 60 square kilometers.

“We spoke with the representatives of Rio Tinto on September 23 this year, and we received two answers to all questions, that it is a business secret or intellectual property,” said Alimpic.

The President of the Coalition for Sustainable Mining of Serbia, Zvezdan Kalmar, said that the Ministry of Construction gave its consent to the adoption of a spatial plan for special purposes for the development of lithium mines.

“That means that the Government of Serbia adopted a crucial document, so it is not true that it did not ‘sign’ anything, as President Aleksandar Vucic claims,” said Kalmar.

He assessed that the spatial plan of special purpose is illegal and illegitimate because alternative development plans, such as agricultural development, have not been considered, but the supply of electricity, water, roads and gas for the needs of the mine will be financed from the budget, with the money of all citizens. Kalmar estimated that that part of western Serbia could be developed by investing that money in agriculture, without polluting the environment. According to him, the Government of Serbia has denied the public the right to

dialogue on the development plan, and the private project is financed with public money. Sreten Djordjevic, a legal consultant of environmental movements, said that the farmers received decisions on the conversion of land from the Republic Geodetic Authority, which is also filing an appeal against that decision.

“Farmers received group decisions with 250 names on one document and 80 on another with the same business number and eight-day appeal deadline in a ‘footnote’, which they did not even see and missed the appeal deadline,” Djordjevic said.

He pointed out that a special problem will be in the amount of the tax on construction land, which the owners will have to pay until the expropriation is carried out, and that the process of opening the mine will take several years. Djordjevic said that Rio Tinto does not yet have a study on the impact of mines on the environment and building permits, and that expropriation is being prepared in the interest of investors. He said that the population will be evicted from the territory where the opening of the mine is planned, and that the worst will be for those who remain on the edges because they will be covered with harmful substances.

“It is estimated that 25,000 liters of water are needed to extract one kilogram of lithium from the ore, which will probably be taken from the Drina and underground lakes, which speaks of possible damage to water even before possible pollution is included,” said Djordjevic.

Source: beta.rs