

Protests over lignite mine and cable car

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Protesters in the North yesterday sent petitions to the natural resources and environment minister in a bid to halt cable-car and lignite mining projects that would adversely affect villagers and threaten a mountain wildlife refuge.

The government announced early last year its plans to build a cable car to transport tourists to the scenic Chiang Dao mountain in Chiang Mai province, but local villagers opposed the project, saying the construction would affect the plants and animals on the mountain.

In a statement, the group says Chiang Dao is a unique lime stone mountain and at 2,275 metres is the third highest mountain in the country. Its semi-alpine ecosystem is also one of its kind in the country.

Another group of villagers in the province expressed concern over a lignite mining project, set to cover around 3,500 rai in the remote Wiang Haeng district. The project was initiated by the Electricity Authority of Thailand (Egat), which wants to use lignite as fuel for its power plants.

The move upset villagers who said deforestation, dust, and noise pollution will prevail if the project goes ahead.

“Three creeks in our neighbourhood will disappear,” said protest leader Natthaniti Wutthithampanya.