



August 11, 2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Aug 11 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Matt Kelley
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

Copy sent via email: matt.kelley@co.nevada.ca.us

SUBJECT: Idaho-Maryland Mine Project; Notice of Preparation; State Clearinghouse No. 2020070378

Dear Mr. Kelley:

Thank you for including the Department of Conservation's Division of Mine Reclamation (Division) in the environmental review process for the Idaho-Maryland Mine Project (Proposed Project) Notice of Preparation (NOP). The NOP indicates that Nevada County (County), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Proposed Project.

As described in the NOP, the Proposed Project encompasses two separate project sites, the Brunswick and the Centennial Industrial Sites, totaling approximately 175.34 acres, along with approximately 2,585 subsurface acres to which the applicant and owner (Rise Grass Valley) has the mineral rights. In addition, the Proposed Project would include approximately 0.30 acres of off-site improvements associated with a potable water pipeline easement, which would be located along East Bennett Road in the road right-of-way. The Proposed Project description includes the following elements that have a nexus with the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA; Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 2710 et seq.):

- Reinitiate underground mining and gold mineralization processing for the Idaho-Maryland Mine over an 80-year period proposed to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during full operations; operations include:
 - Dewatering of the underground mine workings
 - Exploration and mining of the underground workings once dewatering is complete
 - Construction and operations of aboveground facilities, including processing facilities
 - Development of industrial pad
 - Construction of potable water pipeline
- Evaluate a proposed 80-year Mining Use Permit and Reclamation Plan

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The Division has review responsibilities associated with lead agency implementation of SMARA. SMARA provides a comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy to assure that:

- Adverse environmental effects of surface mining operations are prevented or minimized and mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternative land uses.
- Production and conservation of minerals are encouraged, while giving consideration to values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, and aesthetic enjoyment.
- Residual hazards to the public health and safety are eliminated.

The Division's primary focus is on active surface mining operations; however, the Division also addresses issues related to abandoned (pre-1976) legacy mines. Division staff has reviewed the subject NOP pursuant to the CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines and offers the following comments at this time:

- Under the NOP section heading "Project Approvals" please add the requirement under SMARA for the County to submit the Reclamation Plan or the Financial Assurance Cost Estimate (FACE) to the Division for review and comment.
- Division staff will provide comments on the Reclamation Plan for this proposed mining activity once the Division receives the complete Reclamation Plan and any supporting documents along with the statement from the County that certifies the submission as complete and in accordance with PRC Section 2772.1(a)(3)(A-C) .
- Division staff will provide comments on the FACE for the Proposed Project in accordance with PRC Section 2773.4(a-c).

The Division requests to be included on the distribution list for this Proposed Project. Additionally, the Division requests that any subsequent project documents (e.g., the Draft EIR, hearing notices for the Draft and Final EIRs, and any supplemental environmental documents), as well as a copy of the certified Final EIR, be sent to the Division at DMR-Submittals@conservation.ca.gov or the mailing address on the bottom of page 1 of this letter. If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 323-9198.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Carol E. Atkins, Manager
Environmental Services Unit

ec: State Clearinghouse, state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov
Department of Conservation, Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs,
OLRA@conservation.ca.gov