



# Transportation Department

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September 25, 2017

Amy Eschberger, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety  
1313 Sherman St., Room 215  
Denver, CO 80203

**RECEIVED**  
**SEP 25 2017**  
**DIVISION OF RECLAMATION**  
**MINING AND SAFETY**

RE: GOLD HILL MILL SITE – POTENTIAL VIOLATION HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

Ms. Eschberger,

I am the Boulder County Engineer and, on behalf of the Boulder County Transportation Department, I have investigated Sunshine Canyon Drive (aka Horsefel), which is a Boulder County road, in the area of a collapse of an existing and historic mine adit coming from the Gold Hill mine. The support embankment for Sunshine Canyon Drive has experienced recent degradation due to the collapse of the Gold Hill mine's adit tunnel. The degradation is evidenced by severe subsidence of material and the erosion of edge of the hillside supporting the road toward the edge of the traveled way. Photographs 1-4 in in DRMS's inspection report of August 1, 2017 depict this situation accurately. Type I traffic control devices (vertical traffic control panels) were placed in late spring as the conditions continued to deteriorate in an effort to maintain the safety of the travelling public.

The Transportation Department has been very concerned about the safety along the north edge of the road in this collapse area as soon as we were made aware of it and, while the subsidence has not progressed at a significant rate, it is still of extreme concern that it may progress further, partially inhibiting travel along the roadway. This would have significant effects on daily travel, ongoing maintenance, and emergency access on the road, a vital link between Boulder and Gold Hill, especially with a flood recovery project beginning soon on Gold Run Road (south of Gold Hill) as well as the onset of winter weather. Continued soil erosion as a result of rain or snow melt would continue to degrade the edge of the road, further exacerbating the reduction of safety at this location.

As background, the Transportation Department has had recent historic dealings with the agents of this mining site, specifically Mark Steen and Lewis Perkins, who I understand to be owner and operator, respectively. These interactions are summarized below:

**May 24, 2017** – Mike Thomas and Joshua Trickey from Transportation Department met with Lewis Perkins about guardrail removal for access to perform work on the adit; Mr. Perkins mentioned sloughing of the hillside over the adit collapse area; Mr. Perkins was also concerned about additional sloughing due to recent rainfall, stating that moisture had caused concern on his part; the Transportation Department agreed to monitor but wanted to see what would happen over time

**June 21, 2017** – Mike Thomas and John Holste from Transportation Department looked at the site to determine further progression of sloughing; noted Type I traffic control devices were in place as a

result of County Road Maintenance placement; some progression of sloughing noted, but not enough to require additional site protection

**August 8, 2017** – Mike Thomas and Bob Kiepe from Transportation Department met with Mark Steen and Lewis Perkins on site to assess needed work to be completed; after discussion, Mr. Steen was told that the mine company needed to prepare plans and obtain a permit to repair the sloughing area and complete work to get the road back to pre-collapse state

Other phone conversations with Mr. Perkins during this range of dates took place in which Mr. Perkins requested if the county had any further information. No further information was available or presented. As of the date of this letter, the mining company has not presented to the Transportation Department any documentation to obtain the required permit.

The mining company's work on the mine caused the collapse of the support for Boulder County's road, damaging the integrity of the road and creating a potentially hazardous condition for the public. The Boulder County Transportation Department is expecting the mining company to mitigate this degradation/sloughing along the edge of road. The mining company is required to prepare, via a licensed professional engineer (civil expertise) in the State of Colorado, a set of plans and specifications outlining the location, materials, means and methods of this repair. We require a Utility Construction Permit be issued to the contractor that will perform the work to correct this situation once the plans and specifications are completed to the Transportation Department's standards. It would be very helpful if the Mined Land Reclamation Board could issue an order that requires the mining company to repair the road in accordance with Boulder County's regulations. It is our hope that these repairs can be completed within 30 days of the hearing decision so that the road will be safe for winter driving and maintenance activities.

Let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at either 720-564-2655, or [mthomas@bouldercounty.org](mailto:mthomas@bouldercounty.org).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Thomas', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Michael A. Thomas, P.E.  
County Engineer

C: George Gerstle, Transportation Director  
Ted Plank, Road Maintenance Manager  
Conrad Lattes, Assistant County Attorney