

December 19, 2023

Todd Jesse
Environmental Protection Specialist
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety

RE: West Equity Project, File No. #P-2010-015, Modification 2 Application Notice of Deficiency

1. Under section III Project Description of the submitted application form, the response to question 3 indicates that there will be 16 holes drilled. However, in the narrative response to question 5 and the figures in question 6 of that same section state that there will be 20. Please confirm the number of drill holes.

Answer: Number of holes is 20. Section III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION 3. should read 20 holes. The estimated cubic feet of drill core is correct.

2. Per Rule 5.3.1 (f) will crews always be with the drill rig or will gates be installed to prevent unauthorized entry to the drill pads?

Answer: Crews will typically be with the rig. However, gates and signage will be installed to prevent unauthorized entry.

3. Per Rule 3.1.5(3) will the same sediment and erosion control devices (silt fences and wattles) used during operation be left in place during reclamation?

Answer: Erosion control devices will be left in place until reclamation is complete.

4. Per Rule 3.1.5(5) please describe how will drill cuttings be disposed of.

Answer: Drill cutting will be placed in lined sumps and buried during reclamation.

5. Per Rule 3.1.6(5) please describe how drill sumps will be lined to minimize impacts to waters and soils.

Answer: Sumps will be lined with heavy plastic liner that will inhibit drill fluids and cutting from exiting the drill pad.

6. Per Rule 3.1.8(1) are there any wildlife species which require special consideration in the vicinity of the NOI (e.g., elk calving, peregrine falcon nesting)?

Answer: The USFS Environmental Assessment, March 2010, Section 3.16 Wildlife and the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, April 2010 address wildlife species in the Project Area. The Environmental Assessment and the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact have been extended and approved through April 26, 2025 and are available upon request.

7. Per Rule 3.1.9(1) will the segregated topsoil be replaced in a short enough time to avoid deterioration, or will the topsoil need to be preserved in order to be used for reclamation?

Answer: Sediment and erosion control devices (silt fences and or wattles) will be used around any segregated topsoil until the topsoil is used during reclamation.

8. Per Rule 3.1.9(2) and 3.1.9(8) what will be done with woody vegetation that is removed from the roads and drill pads?

Answer: Woody vegetation will be segregated and scattered over reclaimed drill pads and access roads to promote grasses and vegetation growth.