



December 19, 2019

RE: Notice of release and public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Amendment 006 to Permit No. 00013 for Barretts Minerals Inc. (BMI) Regal Mine Expansion.

Dear Interested Party:

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for BMI's amendment application to Permit No. 00013 for the proposed Regal Mine expansion. Approval of the application would allow BMI to expand and deepen the mine pit, increase the size of the waste rock disposal facility, and expand the mine's water management system. The mine and proposed expansion area are located in southwestern Montana, approximately 11 miles southeast of Dillon in Madison County.

BMI applied to DEQ for an amendment on March 29, 2018, under the Metal Mine Reclamation Act, Section 82-4-201, et seq., Montana Code Annotated (MCA). Pursuant to Section 82-4-337, MCA, DEQ determined that BMI's amendment application was complete and compliant and, on March 18, 2019, issued a draft amendment approval. Electronic copies of the applications may be viewed by visiting the website <http://deq.mt.gov/Mining/hardrock/>

The Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), Section 75-1-201, et seq., MCA, requires the preparation of an EIS for state actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The EIS must include a detailed statement on the environmental impact of the proposed action, alternatives to the proposed action, and a no action alternative. For this project, DEQ analyzed a No Action Alternative, a Proposed Action based on BMI's applications submitted to DEQ, and one additional alternative, the Waste Rock Disposal Facility (WRDF) Grading and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative.

In the Draft EIS, DEQ has identified the WRDF Grading and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative as the agency's preferred alternative. The preferred alternative could change in response to public comment on the Draft EIS, new information, or new analysis that might be needed in preparing the Final EIS.

The WRDF Grading and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative incorporates all the features of the Proposed Action Alternative but modifies the WRDF reclamation. The alternative design for the WRDF would eliminate the planar and smooth slopes that are common in reclamation work in favor of a landform with swales and drainages that better mimic the natural landscape. This design would better tie the facility into the existing topography in the area. The preferred alternative also includes a permit stipulation for the disturbance of a raptor

nest. A nest survey of the entire area of disturbance would be performed by a qualified biologist shortly before vegetation is cleared. If the nest that was originally discovered in 2016 or any other nests are observed within an area that would be disturbed, the stipulation requires that the nest may only be destroyed when the nest is inactive and outside of the active breeding season.

The Draft EIS is available for public comment from December 19, 2019- January 21, 2020. All comments become part of the public record for this project and are available for public review, along with the name(s) of the commenter(s). The Draft EIS has been posted on DEQ's website at (<http://deq.mt.gov/Public/eis>). An electronic version is available at the Dillon Public Library (121 South Idaho St, Dillon, MT) during their normal business hours. Digital copies of the Draft EIS may be requested by contacting Craig Jones at (406) 444-0514.

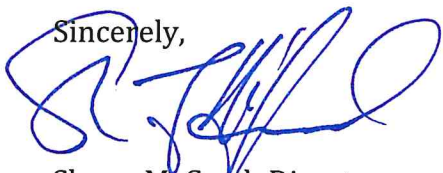
An open house and public meeting will be held to provide the public with information on the proposed project and to provide an opportunity for the public to submit written and/or oral comments. The meeting will be held on Monday, January 6 from 5:00-8:00 pm at the Beaverhead County High School Green Gym at 104 N. Pacific St. Dillon, MT. The meeting will begin with an open house from 5:00 - 6:00 pm. Then, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm, DEQ will give a brief presentation and the public will have an opportunity to provide oral and/or written testimony on the Draft EIS.

Written comments may be submitted at the public meeting. In addition, comments may be submitted via electronic mail at [BarrettsEIS@mt.gov](mailto:BarrettsEIS@mt.gov) or postal mail at:

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**Comments on the Draft EIS must be received by Tuesday, January 21, 2020.**

Sincerely,



Shaun McGrath Director  
Department of Environmental Quality