



March 12, 2020

RE: Notice of release for the Final 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 completed the Final 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 (WRDF), and expand the mine's water management system. The mine and proposed expansion area are approximately 11 miles southeast of Dillon in Madison County in southwestern Montana.

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. 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 Grading and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative.

The Final EIS addresses issues and concerns raised at the public meeting and during the public comment period. All new information and analysis supplied during the comment period and developed in response to comments received were used to prepare the Final EIS.

DEQ has identified the Waste Rock Disposal Facility Grading (WRDF) and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative as the agency's preferred alternative. The WRDF and Mosaic Vegetation Alternative incorporates all the features of the Proposed Action Alternative except WRDF reclamation would be modified. 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. Also, the preferred alternative includes a permit stipulation for the disturbance of a raptor nest. The applicant (BMI) was consulted about the preferred alternative and stipulation, in accordance with 82-4-337(2)(b), MCA.

The Final EIS is not a decision document but will help DEQ make an informed decision with respect to the permit amendment application for the project. DEQ will set forth its final decision and rationale in its Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD is a public notice identifying what the decision is, the reasons for the decision, and any special conditions surrounding the decision or its implementation. Pursuant to ARM 17.4.620, DEQ may issue its ROD no less than 15 days from the transmittal of the Final EIS to the public, the Environmental Quality Council, and the office of the Governor.

The Final EIS has been posted on DEQ's website at (<http://deq.mt.gov/Public/eis>). Digital copies of the Final EIS may be requested by contacting Craig Jones at (406) 444- 0514. Everyone who receives notification of the Final EIS, will also receive notification of DEQ's ROD when it is available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun McGrath', written over a horizontal line.

Shaun McGrath  
Director  
Department of Environmental Quality