

Comprehensive Bond Review for Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc. (Hard Rock Mining Operating Permit No. 00185)

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is conducting a comprehensive bond review for Operating Permit No. 00185 issued to Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc. (BMSS). BMSS's facility and associated disturbances are located around Plains, Montana. Individual site locations are provided below:

- Henry Creek 1: Township 19 North, Range 25 West, Section 6
- Kunzer: Township 20 North, Range 25 West, Section 31
- DNRC: Township 20 North, Range 25 West, Section 34
- Bald Howard: Township 19 North, Range 25 West, Section 25
- Banana Stone: Township 20 North, Range 26 West, Section 12
- Locust Hill: Township 20 North, Range 26 West, Section 12

DEQ currently holds a reclamation bond in the amount of \$98,069. DEQ is proposing to release \$8,059 and retain \$90,010 after releasing bond for completed reclamation tasks.

The bond release was requested by BMSS for a total of 7.5 acres of disturbance on the Bald Howard, DNRC, and Banana Lake sites. The reclamation tasks completed consist of 4.0 acres of grading and contouring on the Bald Howard site, 1.6 acres of grading and contouring on the DNRC site, and 1.9 acres of grading and contouring on the Banana Stone site. Bond would be retained for revegetation and weed control costs. DEQ has determined the partial completion of reclamation would decrease the currently required bond by \$8,059, resulting in a required bond of \$90,010.

In addition to the request for bond release, DEQ is conducting a comprehensive bond review for Operating Permit No. 00185. DEQ has determined that the current bonding level does not represent the present costs of compliance with the Metal Mine Reclamation Act, administrative rules adopted thereunder, and the operating permit. DEQ is proposing a bond increase of \$63,669 (from \$90,010 to \$153,679). The bond increase is largely due to the addition of permitted disturbance area, changes in fuel price and equipment rates, and updated indirect costs.

The procedure for adjusting bonds as a result of a comprehensive bond review is set forth in Section 82-4-338(3), MCA. The permittee and the public will have until October 16th, 2026, to comment on the proposed bond increase. DEQ will issue a final bond determination after the comment period has expired. The permittee, or any person with an

interest that may be adversely affected by DEQ's final bond determination, may obtain a contested case hearing before the Board of Environmental Review. A written request for a hearing must be filed with DEQ within 30 days of the issuance of the final bond determination, stating the reason for the request.

Requests for copies of the bond calculation associated with the comprehensive bond review, accommodations for persons with disabilities who need an alternative accessible format of this notice, and any related questions should be directed to Millie Olsen, Hard Rock Mining Section Supervisor, Mining Bureau, Department of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, by telephone at (406) 444-2461 or by e-mail at DEQHardRock@mt.gov. Requests for accommodation must be submitted no later than 5:00 P.M. on October 6th, 2026.