



"Healthy environment, healthy people"

Montana Department of  
**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Steve Bullock, Governor  
Tracy Stone-Manning, Director

July 1, 2014

P. O. Box 200901 • Helena, MT 59620-0901 • (406) 444-2544 • Website: [www.deq.mt.gov](http://www.deq.mt.gov)

Mr. John Cochran  
Big Sky Coal Company  
Big Sky Coal Mine Area A  
3001 W. Shamrell Blvd., Ste 110  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Permit ID: C1983004CR  
Revision Type: Bond Release  
Permitting Action: Deficiency  
Subject: Completeness Deficiency; #SL8 Final Bond Release

Dear John:

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reviewed Bond Release Application #SL8 for final bond release to determine if all the appropriate rules have been addressed. The deficiency described below must be addressed before the application can be ruled complete.

Please provide a demonstration that hydrologic commitments have been met. The requirements for final bond release are comprehensive in scope, requiring compliance with all requirements of the act and rules (ARM 26.4.821 as read on January 12, 1989). Therefore, the application for final bond release must also be a comprehensive document. The following questions must be answered; please include data analyses and summary to adequately support your answers:

- 1) Have all commitments in the mine's reclamation plan, including the plan for the protection of the hydrologic balance, been successfully completed?
- 2) Is surface or subsurface water pollution occurring or likely to occur?

While previous years' Annual Hydrology Reports and Semi-annual Hydrology Reports are certainly relevant, the application should not simply reference them in their entirety. Please summarize data within the reports that are specific to the #SL8 bond release area and describe the results achieved as they relate to the permittee's approved reclamation plan. Upon receipt of acceptable responses to this deficiency, DEQ will determine the application to be complete.

In order to be more consistent with the format and contact information of recent public notices published by DEQ, we have revised your proposed public notice (see enclosure). Please use this for bond release #SL8 and as a template for future public notices. An electronic copy will be e-mailed to you soon. Please feel free to contact me with questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

*Melissa Sjolund*

Melissa Sjolund, Technical Coordinator  
Coal and Uranium Program  
Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau  
Ph: 406.444.2885/Fax: 406.444.4988/Email: [msjolund@mt.gov](mailto:msjolund@mt.gov)

Enclosure: Revised Proposed Public Notice  
C: Jeff Fleischman, OSM Casper Office (with Enclosure)  
FC: 620.511A (SL8)

## Public Notice Example-Bond Release

Pursuant to A.R.M. 17.24.1112, notice is hereby given that Big Sky Coal Company, with its offices located in Forsyth, Montana, has filed Application SL8 for Final Bond Release for Big Sky Mine Area A, Colstrip, Montana, under the Montana Strip and Underground Mine Reclamation Act and Permanent Regulatory Program. Permit No. C1983004CR was originally issued in November 15, 1983. The current total bond amount is \$1,788,530.72 and a reduction of \$229,788 plus liability is being sought for this release. All reclamation was completed on these areas in accordance with the approved reclamation plan, meeting necessary standards for final bond release.

The area, containing approximately 442 acres for which partial release is requested, is located in portions of the following sections in Rosebud County:

T1N, R41E, M.P.M. Sections: 14 S1/2SE1/4, SW1/4 & W1/2NW1/4,  
15 S1/2 & S1/2NE1/4, and  
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The application is available for inspection at the Department of Environmental Quality offices in Helena (2001 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Building B), and Billings (1371 Rintop Drive, Building IP09, Airport Industrial Park). Electronic copies of the application may be requested by visiting the website <http://www.deq.mt.gov/ea/coal.mcp> or by emailing [DEQCoal@mt.gov](mailto:DEQCoal@mt.gov).

Written comments, objections and/or requests for informal conference on this application may be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality, Coal and Uranium Program, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901 or by emailing [DEQCoalComments@mt.gov](mailto:DEQCoalComments@mt.gov) within 30 days of the final publication of this notice.