



August 27, 2019

RE: Notice of release and public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Spring Creek Mine TR1 Major Revision, Big Horn County, Montana

Dear Interested Party:

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed TR1 major revision (TR1 Project) to Surface Mining Permit C1979012 submitted by Spring Creek Coal LLC for the Spring Creek Mine (SCM) which is approximately eight miles northeast of Decker, MT. The TR1 Project would add 977 acres of new mining disturbance for approximately 72 million tons of coal. The TR1 Project would extend the life of the mine by approximately four years, from 2027 to 2031. The proposed mine disturbance would utilize existing infrastructure at SCM.

The TR1 Project would increase the disturbance area from 6,134 acres to 7,111 acres (977 acres) for the life of the mine, however, the approved surface mining permit boundary would remain the same at 9,220 acres. The TR1 Project would change the currently-approved postmine topography to better resemble the premine topography and provide additional flat-benched areas for sage grouse habitat. The TR1 Project includes wildlife mitigation measures for impacts to sage grouse habitat.

The Draft EIS evaluates the environmental impacts resulting from the TR1 Project, pursuant to the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The EIS analyzes in detail the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative.

The Draft EIS is available for public comment from August 27, 2019 to September 26, 2019. All comments become part of the project record and are available for public review, including the commenter's name and address. The Draft EIS is posted on DEQ's website at <http://deq.mt.gov/Public/eis>. An electronic CD version is available at the Big Horn County Public Library, 419 N. Custer Ave, Hardin, MT.

A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, to allow for the public to submit oral comments on the Draft EIS. The meeting will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Big Horn County Extension Office in the LBH Center, 317 N. Custer Ave, Hardin, Montana. The public meeting will be conducted in an open house style format and will include informational displays and areas where attendees may record and submit written comments. There will also be time for attendees to submit oral comments from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm; a transcriber will record the oral comments.

Comments on the Draft EIS must be received by Thursday, September 26, 2019. Comments may be submitted at the public meeting or electronically using the DEQ Public Comment Portal at <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/publiccomment/>.

Written comments may also be submitted to the following address:

Jen Lane
Department of Environmental Quality
1520 East 6th Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59601

The DEQ will make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities who wish to participate in the meeting. If you require an accommodation, please contact Jen Lane at 406-444-4956 or jlane2@mt.gov.

Sincerely,



George Mathieus
Deputy Director
Department of Environmental Quality