

April 2, 2025

Chuck Buus
Sustainability Manager
Golden Sunlight Mines, Inc.
453 MT Hwy 2 East
Whitehall, MT 59759

Sent by email to: cbuus@barrick.com

RE: Golden Sunlight Mines Inc. (Hard Rock Mining Operating Permit No. 00065), Decision Notice for Minor Amendment 018, South Ramp Well

Dear Mr. Buus,

On December 31, 2024, Golden Sunlight Mines, Inc. (GSM) submitted an application to amend Hard Rock Mining Operating Permit No. 00065 (Amendment 018) to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Following a deficiency letter issued by DEQ on January 27, 2025, GSM provided a response submittal and complete application on March 4, 2025. The application for Minor Amendment 018 proposes to install and operate a replacement dewatering well (South Ramp Well) at a new location and elevation within Mineral Hill Pit, compared to the existing South Well dewatering system. The replacement well would be used to maintain the local groundwater cone of depression in the pit area at or below an elevation of 4,850 feet, rather than the currently approved control elevation of 4,750 feet. The new elevation would still prevent groundwater outflow from the pit area and preclude impacts to downgradient water quality. There would be no new disturbance under this amendment and the proposed activities would occur entirely on private land.

For a minor amendment, DEQ shall not implement the application, notice, and hearing requirements for new permits or major amendments, pursuant to Sections 82-4-337 and 82-4-353, Montana Code Annotated (MCA). DEQ shall provide the permittee with a notice of decision on the adequacy of the minor amendment application within 30 days of receipt of the application (Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.24.119(4)). An amendment approval issued by DEQ would authorize GSM to install the replacement dewatering well and operate the system to maintain compliance with the groundwater control elevation.

DEQ published the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) on April 2, 2025, which analyzed the possible environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. DEQ identified the Proposed Action as the preferred alternative. The decisions contained in this decision document are based on the analysis documented in the Final EA.

DEQ's Decisions

DEQ has applied the significance criteria, according to the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.4.608, to determine the significance of potential impacts on the human environment. After applying those criteria, DEQ has determined that preparation of an EA is the appropriate level of review under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). A summary of DEQ's review of the significance criteria is included in the Final EA.

DEQ has decided to approve GSM's application for Amendment 018, selecting the Proposed Action, as described in the Final EA. The approved amendment authorizes the installation and operation of a replacement dewatering well in Mineral Hill Pit. The approved amendment also establishes a new groundwater control elevation (4,850 feet) that would maintain the local groundwater cone of depression in the pit area and prevent outflow from degrading downgradient groundwater quality. Before commencing activity authorized by this permit amendment, GSM must be in compliance with Title 75, Chapter 2, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) as amended, Title 75, Chapter 5, MCA, as amended, Title 75, Chapter 6, MCA, as amended, and administrative rules adopted pursuant to these laws. Based on the application information submitted by GSM, DEQ has determined GSM to be in compliance with these statutory provisions.

Pursuant to Sections 82-4-337(1)(h)(i) and 82-4-338, MCA, GSM is required to file with DEQ a reclamation bond in a form and amount determined by DEQ. Based on the details of the Proposed Action and the existing obligated bond held for reclamation and long-term site management (\$138,668,184), DEQ has determined that no additional disturbance or associated reclamation bond is required for the approved action.

Appeal of DEQ's Decisions

Legal actions seeking review of DEQ's approval of GSM's application for an amendment must be filed within 90 days from the date of this decision document under Section 82-4-349(1), MCA. Any action or proceeding alleging a failure by DEQ to comply with MEPA, or inadequate compliance with a MEPA requirement, must be brought within 60 days after issuance of this decision document pursuant to Section 75-1-201(5)(a)(ii), MCA.

Sincerely,



Eric Dahlgren
Chief, Mining Bureau
Air, Energy and Mining Division
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
(406) 444-5245 or email edahlgren@mt.gov

File: 00065.3

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