



November 13, 2020

Submitted via USFS Electronic Comment Tool

Chad Stewart
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Re: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Scoping Comments on the Proposed Ouray Silver Mine, Inc. Fringe Lease

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) appreciates the opportunity to provide scoping comments on the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) environmental analysis of the Ouray Silver Mines, Inc. (OSMI) fringe lease application. CDPHE thanks USFS staff for their continued efforts to sustain the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty of forests and associated lands. Based on the USFS scoping letter for this proposal, it is unclear what the potential environmental impacts of this proposal are and whether or not they would be considered significant impacts. CDPHE respectfully requests that USFS:

- Expand the scope of review to include analysis of air quality, waste management, and hydrological impacts during construction and operation. Include analysis beyond federal parcels as required by NEPA.
- Identify activities and equipment that will generate emissions and provide emission estimates (e.g., diesel equipment and diesel backup power; dust emissions; development of new roads on private land; drilling and blasting activities).
- Ensure that the emission generating activities implement the most protective best management practices to minimize emissions.
- Include discussion of environmental mitigation measures to be implemented.
- Consider possible conflicts between the proposed action and the objectives of state plans and policies as required by NEPA.
- Collect adequate water quality data in potentially impacted waters (both surface water and groundwater) to make determinations regarding the path forward.
- Ensure the wastewater treatment upgrades account for this expansion, mainly in terms of any flow increases and how that may affect treatment.
- Include discussion of near- and long-term environmental management of the project (e.g., construction, operation, closure, and post-closure phases). Include restrictions for activities not analyzed in the project's environmental assessment.
- Include discussion of environmental impact analyses to be completed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prior to the issuance of a fringe lease.

CDPHE appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and we look forward to reviewing the environmental assessment of this proposed action. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

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