



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Natural Resources

JOEL FERRY
Executive Director

Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office

REDGE B. JOHNSON
Director

May 14, 2025

Submitted electronically: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=67951>

Kristy Groves
Forest Supervisor
Ashley National Forest
355 N Vernal Avenue
Vernal, UT 84078

Subject: **Tesoro Exploration Project**
RDCC Project No. 86642

Dear Supervisor Groves:

The State of Utah (State), through its Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, is in receipt of your letter dated April 8, 2025, announcing the comment period for the 2025 Tesoro Exploration Project (the Project), located in the Pole Mountain-Farm Creek area of Duchesne County, in the Ashley National Forest. Tesoro seeks authorization to use equipment to access and open an old, collapsed mine entry ("adit") to facilitate exploration and sampling for valuable minerals. Surface disturbance is expected to be less than one acre and would be reclaimed upon completion of the exploration. The State supports the project and submits the following comments for your consideration.

Consistency with the State of Utah Resource Management Plan

The State has an adopted Resource Management Plan (RMP) which can be found at: <https://rmp.utah.gov/>. The RMP contains the following goal, objectives, and policies applicable to the Project:

Goal

Promote responsible and sustainable stewardship and development of Utah's mineral resources.

Tesoro Exploration Project

May 14, 2025

Page 2

Objectives

- 1. Protect and expand access to significant mineral resources, including critical minerals and REEs, for current and future generations of Americans.*
- 2. Encourage the mining, transportation, and processing of mineral resources in Utah, including critical minerals and REEs.*

Policies

- Support responsible and environmentally conscious mining for mineral resources on lands managed by the State of Utah, BLM, and Forest Service.*
- Engage with federal land management agencies on all mining-related projects to promote the responsible mining of mineral resources.*

The State concludes that the Project complies with the above goal, objectives, and policies of the State RMP.

Consistency with the Duchesne County Resource Management Plan

The Duchesne County Resource Management Plan, which can be found at <https://utah-resource-management-planning-plpco.hub.arcgis.com/pages/county-management-plans>, contains the following policies associated with mining:

Access to public lands for mineral development must be increased in the economic interest of the county, citizens, and government.

Mineral exploration and development are consistent with the multiple use philosophy for management of public lands. These activities constitute a temporary use of the land that will not impair its use for other purposes in the future. All oil and mineral exploration activities shall comply with appropriate laws and regulations.

Identification of energy and mineral potential and location is important for planning future energy needs and resource management. Agencies shall plan, fund, and encourage by way of policy management decisions relative to energy resources.

Tesoro Exploration Project

May 14, 2025

Page 3

All management plans must address and analyze the possibility for the development of minerals where there is a reasonable expectation of their occurrence within the planning area.

Development of the solid, fluid, and gaseous mineral resources of the state should be encouraged. The waste of fluid and gaseous minerals within developed areas should be prohibited. Requirements to mitigate or reclaim mineral development projects should be based on credible evidence of significant impacts to natural or cultural resources.

The State concludes that the Project is consistent with the policy statements of the Duchesne County CRMP listed above.

The State agrees with your plans to prepare an environmental assessment toward a likely finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The State agrees that the proposal falls within exemptions permitted in inventoried roadless areas and urges the Forest Service to approve the project.

The State appreciates the opportunity to submit comments. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Redge B. Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Redge B. Johnson
Director