

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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Date: February 8, 2021

To: Project stakeholders, interested parties

Re: Boston Hill Mine Safeguard Project

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, Abandoned Mine Land Program (AML), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is proposing to safeguard hazardous abandoned mine openings/features throughout the Boston Hill Mining District (District) located adjacent to the Town of Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico. We are writing to inform you of the opportunity for the public and engaged stakeholders to provide input for the project, which is intended to increase public safety while respecting the recreational, cultural and natural values of the District.

Mining at the District was conducted from the late 1870s until the early 1970s when operations ended permanently, leaving behind large mine features such as the Legal Tender and Silver Spots mines, and numerous surface pits throughout the District. Much of the District is now included in the Boston Hill Open Space. The open space is a unique resource for the Town of Silver City, containing numerous hiking and biking trails as well as scenic overlooks of Silver City and beyond. The District consists of a mix of Town of Silver City, BLM, and private lands.

The Boston Hill Mine Safeguard Project (hereon referred to as Proposed Project) would involve measures to restrict human access where a danger to public safety exists. Measures including fence replacement around mine openings such as the Legal Tender mine and the installation of gates, cupolas, or other wildlife-compatible closures would be implemented site-wide where dangerous features are located. Structural closures would be built on site to BLM's Visual Resource Management specifications. Wherever possible, existing roads would be used to access the mining features proposed for closure.

The purpose of the proposed project is to safeguard the general public from hazards associated with historical mining features, including adits, shafts, subsidence features, and other mine openings, throughout the Boston Hill Mining District, while preserving recreational opportunities, cultural resources and wildlife habitat. There is a need for the proposed project as there are unprotected mine features throughout the district that are hazardous and yet easily accessible to the public.

Funding for the proposed project is provided through the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) as managed by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM). As a federally-funded project an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared for the proposed project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to project planning and implementation and emphasizes that the environmental impacts of federally funded projects be given serious consideration in the decision-making process.

There will be one public meeting to be held virtually to gather input on the proposed project and we invite you and your organization to participate. Attached, please find the meeting web link, date and time as well as details on how to submit comments. You may also submit comments directly by replying to this email. We look forward to working with the public and engaged stakeholders as the planning process for the proposed project continues.

For information regarding the Boston Hill Mine Safeguard Project, please visit the AML website at <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/MMD/announcements.html> or contact Mike Tompson P.E., Program Manager, New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program, (505) 690-8063 or Mike.Tompson@state.nm.us.

Thank you for your interest.

NM Abandoned Mine Land Program

Attachments: Public Meeting Information and Public Input Instructions, English and Spanish versions