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TO THE COMMISSION  
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# STATE OF NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

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29 July 2020

David Otori, Permit Lead  
Permit Lead, Mining Act Reclamation Program  
Mining and Minerals Division (MMD)  
1220 South St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

***RE: Modification 20-1 to Mount Taylor Mine, Rio Grande Resources Corporation,  
Permit No. C1002RE; NMDGF No. NMERT-656.***

Dear Mr. Otori:

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the proposed permit modification to the Mount Taylor Mine Closeout/Closure Plan (CCP) submitted by Rio Grande Resources Corporation (RGRC). A site inspection was conducted on 21 July 2020 by staff from the Department, MMD and RGRC.

The updated CCP stipulated the demolition and removal of the mine headframes. In the requested modification, RGRC is proposing to allow the headframes to remain in place for "raptor habitat" and/or designation as an historic site. The Department does not consider the mine headframes to be appropriate habitat for raptors and should be removed as originally stipulated in the CCP. The undisturbed surrounding habitat near the mine contains abundant cliff faces and mature trees for raptor nesting and perch sites. Additionally, the headframes are not old enough to qualify for consideration as an historic site.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed permit modification. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Kellermueller, Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist, at (505) 476-8159 or [ronald.kellermueller@state.nm.us](mailto:ronald.kellermueller@state.nm.us)

Sincerely,

Matt Wunder, Ph.D.  
Chief, Ecological and Environmental Planning Division

cc: USFWS NMES Field Office