



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Idaho Falls District Office
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(208) 524-7500



In Reply Refer To: (I-28115, I-0258)

July 10, 2012

Re: Dairy Syncline Environmental Impact Statement Trail Canyon Access Route Alternative Notification

Dear Interested Party:

The United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello Field Office (BLM) and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), Caribou-Targhee National Forest (Agencies) are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for J.R. Simplot Company's (Simplot's) Dairy Syncline Mine and Reclamation Plan proposal (Project). The BLM is serving as the lead agency. Based on comments received through the public scoping process for the EIS, the Agencies have determined that evaluation of an alternative access route to the Georgetown Canyon Road proposed in Simplot's Mine and Reclamation Plan is necessary. The route is only under consideration at this time and no decisions have yet been made. Transportation along any route would consist of workers, vendors, deliveries, and supplies. No ore haulage would occur since Simplot would convey the ore primarily through their existing pipeline in the Conda area. The intention of this letter is to notify residents or owners of property adjacent to the Trail Canyon Road that this road is now considered an alternative route that will be fully analyzed in the EIS.

The Project is located approximately 12 miles east of Soda Springs, Idaho, in Southeastern Caribou County. Activities associated with the proposed Project would occur on lands administered by the FS and BLM, as well as on state and private lands, with the mineral estate administered by the BLM and the State of Idaho.

Four public scoping meetings were held May 3, 2010, through May 6, 2010. Scoping input from the public meetings suggested that a mine access alternative for employees and vendors should be considered that would avoid the City of Georgetown. The following alternative was developed in response to comments received from the general public and local governments during the scoping process.

Trail Canyon Access Route Alternative

This access alternative would begin at Highway 34 north of Soda Springs, Idaho; follow the Trail Canyon road east to the South Fork Trail Canyon and North Fork Trail Canyon intersection, and then follow the South Fork Trail Canyon route to Slug Creek road. From this point, the alternative access would follow Slug Creek road south to the Wilde Canyon intersection, then west along Wilde Canyon road to the mine area. This alternate alignment is on an established, public corridor through USFS, BLM, state, and private lands. Beginning at

Highway 34, approximately six miles of this alignment is chipped or surfaced with asphalt. Asphalt surfacing terminates after approximately 2,000 feet along the South Fork Trail Canyon area. The remaining 14 miles of road is surfaced with gravel and borrow material from the road corridor. This route would be utilized by employees and vendors and would be kept open year round.

A road width of 18 feet and a grade of less than eight percent were the criteria used in the development of this alternative access route. These criteria were based upon conditions of the current Smoky Canyon Mine access road that has been safely utilized for access by employees and vendors since the mine was opened in the early 1980s. The existing road edges along the entire length of the alternate alignment were surveyed. This survey information was used to determine areas of the alignment that would require widening or grade moderation based upon the criteria listed above.

With this letter, we are advising you of this alternative access route to the Project, that the route will be analyzed in the EIS, and that the route could be selected in the Record of Decision. The Draft EIS is anticipated to be completed and available for public review and comment in early 2013. Prior to that time, you may contact David Alderman, BLM Project Manager at 208-478-6369 for additional information. Please address any written comments to the following: Dairy Syncline EIS, Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello Field Office, 4350 Cliffs Drive, Pocatello, Idaho 83204. Email: Dairy_Syncline_EIS@blm.gov.

Sincerely,



Joe Kraayenbrink
District Manager