United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Mount Lewis Field Office
50 Bastian Road
Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820
Phone: 775-635-4000 Fax: 775-635-4034
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html

In Reply Refer To:
3809 (NVB0100)
2800 (NVB0100)
NVN-091037
NVN-092928
NVN-092929
NVN-092930
NVN-092931

SEP 15 2015

Dear Interested Public:

You are receiving this letter because you have expressed interest in the following proposal or you have expressed interest in past Federal actions pertaining to public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Battle Mountain District.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Mount Lewis Field Office (MLFO) will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will analyze the impacts of the proposed Gold Bar Mine Project in Eureka County, Nevada. The EIS would identify, describe and evaluate direct, indirect, residual, and cumulative impacts from the proposed action including resource protection measures for mitigating the possible impacts from the proposal. An interdisciplinary approach will be used to develop the EIS, in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified.

McEwen Mining Inc. (MMI) has submitted a Plan of Operations (NVN-091037) to develop a gold mine in the southern Robert Mountains, approximately 30 miles northwest of Eureka, Nevada. The proposed McEwen Gold Bar Mine Project (Project) consists of a mining Plan of Operations and four ROW grant authorizations to be analyzed in a single NEPA analysis document. Mining would occur from the existing Gold Pick and Gold Ridge pits and the proposed Cabin Creek North and South pits. Additional disturbance would be result from activities associated with gold mining operations, including waste rock disposal areas, crusher and ore stockpile pad, growth media stockpiles, process ponds, haul roads, access roads and power lines, heap leach facility, ancillary facilities, and diversion channels and sediment basins. Total proposed Project disturbance would be approximately 1,300 acres, including disturbance associated with the ROWs (consisting of approximately 1,137 acres of surface disturbance on public land and 163 acres of surface disturbance on private land controlled by McEwen, as well as other private land owners); 366 acres of the total disturbance would occur on areas disturbed by previous mining operations. The proposed Project would take up to 17 years to complete, including: A year of pre-stripping and construction, 8 years of mining, 4 years of reclamation following mine closure, and 4 years of post-reclamation monitoring. The proposed pit depths would not intercept groundwater. No pit dewatering would be necessary and no pit lakes are expected to form after mining operations end. The Project is expected to employ 151 individuals comprised of 90 contractors and 61 staff.

The BLM is seeking your input regarding issues that may be analyzed in the EIS. The public scoping meeting provides the public and other interested agencies and organizations an opportunity to learn about the Project and to help identify issues, provide input, and propose alternatives to be addressed in the EIS before BLM begins drafting it. Early public involvement is crucial to identify various issues that may be addressed through the process.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on September 11, 2015, formally opening the public scoping period for the EIS. Written comments on the scope of the EIS must be postmarked or otherwise hand delivered by 4:30 PM on or before October 21, 2015; faxed to ATTN: Shiva Achet, Project Manager Gold Bar EIS Project; or e-mailed to: blm_nv_bmdo_mlfo_gold_bar_project_eis@blm.gov. A public scoping meeting will be held:

- October 6th, 2015, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Eureka County Commissioners Meeting Room at 10 South Main Street, Eureka, NV89316.

Representatives from MMI and BLM personnel will be present at the scoping meeting to explain the environmental review process, the mining regulations, and the proposed plan amendment and the associated EIS. You may submit comments on issues in writing to the BLM at the public scoping meeting or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods outlined above. Comments received and a list of attendees at the scoping meeting will be available for public review.

Comments and documents pertinent to this proposal, including names and addresses of respondents, may be viewed at the Mount Lewis Field Office during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays). Comments may be published as part of the EIS. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety. For more information please contact Shiva Achet, Planning and Environmental Coordinator at (775) 635-4000 or blm_nv_bmdo_mlfo_gold_bar_project_eis@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Jon D. Sherve
Field Manager
Mount Lewis Field Office