

August 14, 2012

Richard Opper, Director  
Department of Environmental Quality  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Montanore Mine Project, Libby, Montana

Dear Mr. Opper,

This letter is written in regards to the Montanore Mine Project, located in Lincoln County approximately 12 miles southeast of Libby, Montana. We, as individual members of the Environmental Quality Council (EQC), write to express our concerns over excessive delays in the permitting process for the Montanore Mine.

On July 14, 2005 the DEQ and USFS as lead agencies issued a notice in the *Federal Register* stating the "draft EIS is expected May 2006 and the final EIS is expected by January 2007." It is now 2012 and the final EIS has still not been issued with no definitive schedule as to when it may be completed. Permit 150 was issued in 1992 that authorized the full project and remains valid today. The project also has an approved discharge permit and remains active as well. These are two critical elements of the project and the project has gone through a Non-degradation review.

As we are sure you are aware Lincoln County continually has one of the highest, if not the highest unemployment rate in the state. We can all certainly sympathize with the citizens of Lincoln County, however, we expect our state and federal agencies to prioritize and expedite the permitting process for projects such as Montanore that would have a huge economic impact on Lincoln County as well as the entire state of Montana.

It is our request, as individual EQC members, that the DEQ provide a prompt response to us as to the status of the Montanore Mine project as well as a timeframe for completion. The permitting process should be completed in 2012; in addition we request that you provide the EQC and its staff with regular updates regarding the completion of the permitting process.

Thank you for your time and consideration, we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

EQC  
September 13, 2012  
Exhibit 9