

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MINOR REVISION
COAL AND URANIUM PROGRAM
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

COMPANY NAME: Westmoreland Savage Corp DATE: March 5, 2012

PERMIT#: C1984002 REVISION NO: MR45

LOCATION: Savage Coal Mine, Richland Co., T20N, R57E, S21

Type and Purpose of Action:

The mine operator is proposing a revision to the mining permit to allow a variance from Administrative Rule 17.24.501(6) which requires Backfilling and grading to be kept current with mining operations. The rules specify no more than four consecutive spoil ridges be present and backfilling and grading to be completed within two years after coal removal.

The Operator contends the requirements cannot be met due to the confined mining operation and sequence and the need to maintain three ramps through the narrow spoil area.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

The proposed action would not significantly change permit commitments concerning reclamation of the lands beyond the proposed delay in the reclamation. The delay in reclamation would mean a delay in the establishment of vegetation and prolonging of the period when erosion and sediment loss might be a concern. The sediment concerns will be addressed through the current commitments for BTCA and sediment ponds. The reestablishment of vegetation is of less significance as the land in question is largely farm lands and is assumed to be promptly returned to that use after reclamation.

Alternative Actions:

The Operator could change the mining operation to not use for the center or southernmost haul ramp. This may not be economically practical.

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Title: Mining Engineer

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