

Jim: Review + Route to File  
ACT/007/018



0019

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Moab District  
P. O. Box 970  
Moab, Utah 84532

3482  
U-50722  
(U-065c)

APR 13 1992

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
Certification No. P 872 631 179

RECEIVED

APR 15 1992

DIVISION OF  
OIL GAS & MINING

Mr. Tom Paluso  
Chief Engineer  
Soldier Creek Coal Co.  
P.O. Box I  
Price, Utah 84501

RE: Soldier Canyon Mine Resource Recovery and Protection Plan  
(R2P2) Modification, 3rd West Pillars Section

Dear Mr. Paluso:

On January 27, 1992, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Price Coal Office received a phone request from Soldier Creek Coal Company (SCCC) to modify the approved R2P2 for the 3rd West Pillars section of the Soldier Canyon Mine. After inspecting the mine and evaluating the situation, Price Coal Office personnel granted a verbal approval to SCCC to modify the approved plan on January 28, 1992. A formal written request for the modification was received on the same day. The reserves in question are located in the Rock Canyon Seam on Federal coal lease U-50722.

The approved plan for pillar retreat mining in the 3rd West Pillars section was to mine pillar rows from west to east with each row consisting of eight pillars. One pillar in each row was left on the south side for a bleeder. Presently, the continuous miner is mining in the 3rd pillar of pillar row #13 inby the 19th crosscut. Due to severe bouncing activities, the company proposed to abandon this row and the other three pillar rows to the east (rows #14 - #16). Starting with row #17, SCCC plans to pull only six pillars across the panel instead of the eight originally planned. This would leave two pillars on the north side and one pillar on the south side for protection and a bleeder (please see enclosure).

According to SCCC, the modification is necessary due to the severe bouncing in the section which has deteriorated the pillars and injured company employees. It was jointly determined by the mine management and the Mine Safety and Health Administration inspector that further extraction in the present pillar line could not be continued safely.

A file search indicated that this section was developed on 80X80-foot centers. A 9-foot mining height is presently being mined under 1250 to 1750 feet of overburden. A weak roof was encountered on development between the 11th and 25th crosscut which forced SCCC

to delete the north pillar at the 11th crosscut and reduce the pillar size at the 25th crosscut. Steve Falk, a BLM mining engineer from the Price Coal Office, inspected the mine on January 28, 1992. During the mine inspection, a major floor heave, roof fractures, severe rib bursts and pillar failure were observed along the 19th crosscut. A sandstone top of 5 to 10 feet of weak laminated roof was also observed behind the mined-out pillars. A discussion with a SCCC mining engineer indicates that the company is in close communication with a rock mechanics engineer at U. S. Bureau of Mines (Spokane Office) regarding this matter. Independent calculations conducted by Abe Elias, BLM engineer, indicate that pillar sizes on 80X80-foot centers is marginal for 1500 to 1750 feet of cover, even with fair geologic conditions.

The combination of a shale roof, the sandstone formation above the shale, and marginal pillar sizes have created an unsafe condition. The proposed plan of leaving three complete rows and one partial row (30 pillars) should be an adequate barrier to support the overriding stresses. Leaving two pillars on the north side will move mining activities to a location under lower overburden as additional precaution against further bounces. Under the present circumstances, Price Coal Office personnel agree with this proposal to abandon these pillars to reduce safety risks to the mining crew. Geologic study and adequate pillar design by SCCC is strongly encouraged in the future to ensure maximum economic recovery.

BLM has determined that the mine plan change is in compliance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the regulations at 43 CFR 3400, the lease terms and stipulations, and will achieve maximum economic recovery of the Federal coal. Therefore, the BLM will allow the mine plan change. This confirms the verbal approval given to Soldier Creek Mine personnel on January 28, 1992. An estimated 58,000 tons of coal reserves will now be deemed unrecoverable. A copy of the approved mine map is enclosed.

If you have any questions, please contact Gary Johnson, Chief - Price Coal Office at (801)637-4584.

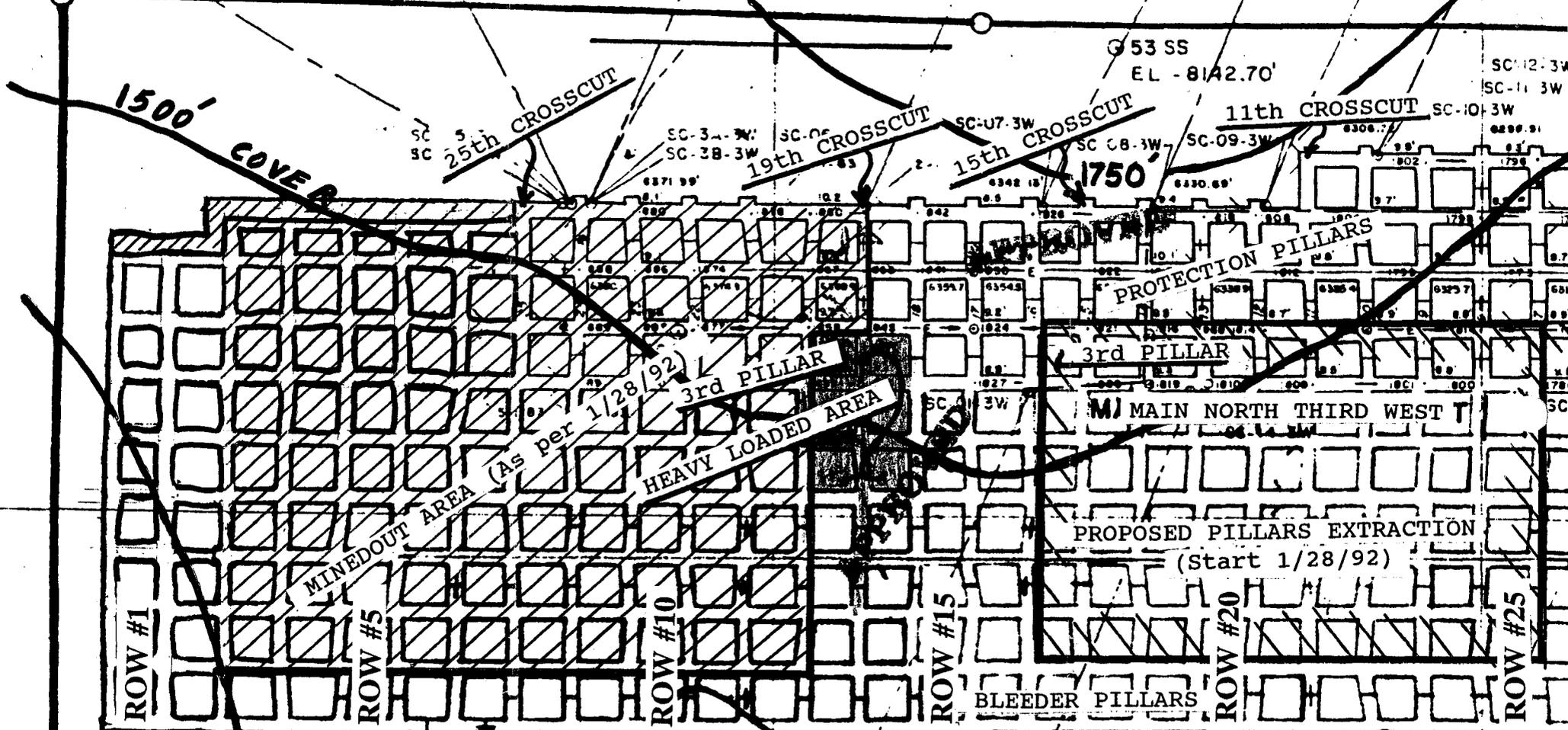
Sincerely yours,



for Assistant District Manager  
Mineral Resources

Enclosure:  
Approved Mine Map

cc:  
DM, Moab (U-065) (w/encl.)  
SD, Utah (U-921) (w/encl.)  
UDOGM, Salt Lake City (w/encl.)



G 53 SS  
EL - 8142.70  
SC-12-3W  
SC-11-3W  
SC-10-3W

1500' COVER

SC 25th CROSSCUT

SC-3-3W  
SC-28-3W  
SC-06  
19th CROSSCUT

SC-07-3W  
SC-08-3W  
15th CROSSCUT

11th CROSSCUT

MINEDOUT AREA (As per 1/28/92)

3rd PILLAR  
HEAVY LOADED AREA

PROTECTION PILLARS

3rd PILLAR

MAIN NORTH THIRD WEST

PROPOSED PILLARS EXTRACTION  
(Start 1/28/92)

ROW #1

ROW #5

ROW #10

ROW #15

ROW #20

ROW #25

BLEEDER PILLARS

ABANDONED PILLAR ROWS

THIRD WEST PILLARS

MINOR MODIFICATION TO  
MINING PLAN APPROVED BY  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Recommended By:

*Mc Elroy* April 7, 92  
Mining Engineer (Date)

Approved By:

*Gary Johnson* 4-8-92  
Chief, Price Coal Office (Date)

INBY  
MAIN WEST

1250'

SOLDIER CREEK COAL COMPANY  
SOLDIER CANYON MINE  
ROCK CANOYN SEAM  
APPROVED MINE MAP

