

*May and Tony Coal*

## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Utah State Office  
 P.O. Box 45155  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155  
<http://www.blm.gov>



IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

3482  
 SL-070645  
 U-06039  
 (UT-923)

Certified Mail--Return Receipt Requested  
 Certificate No.

Mr. Carl Pollastro  
 Director of Technical Services and Project Development  
 Interwest Mining Company  
 One Utah Center, Suite 2000  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84140-0200

Re: Minor Modification of Resource Recovery and Protection Plan (R2P2), 7<sup>th</sup> Right Longwall  
 Extraction Room, Hiawatha Seam, Deer Creek Mine.

Dear Mr. Pollastro:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has received a request from Interwest Mining Company to change the approved R2P2 by shortening the 7<sup>th</sup> Right Longwall panel by extracting the longwall 100 feet earlier at the subject mine. The area in question is located in the North Rilda Ridge area, Hiawatha Coal Seam, on Federal coal lease U-06039.

Interwest proposes to cease mining the 7<sup>th</sup> Right longwall and extract the machinery at crosscut 5 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Right headgate entries. The previously approved extraction room was set at crosscut 4. The longwall panel would be shortened by about 100 feet. Interwest reports the area around the planned take out room for the 7<sup>th</sup> right longwall has adverse geologic conditions that will make extracting the longwall difficult. A fluvial channel enters the area and has scoured the coal down to less than 7 feet at crosscut 4. The coal height from crosscut 4 to 3 is about 6.5 feet thick. Interwest states that the longwall machinery (stage loader in particular) cannot fit through this low coal. In addition, the coal along the rib from crosscut 5 to 4 has 7 feet of coal with a foot or two of cap rock before the roof turns to sandstone at crosscut 4. This cap rock will not be held in the roof and high ash is expected from this cap rock between crosscut 4 and 5.

The BLM inspected the area on January 27 and April 28, 2004, and has verified the geologic conditions and equipment specifications reported by Interwest. Coal heights were noted as all being less than 7 feet from half way from 5 to 4 crosscut all the way up to crosscut 3 and the regulator entry off crosscut three. The sandstone in the roof was pronounced and coal thicknesses were mostly 6.5 feet. A seam rollup from crosscut 4 to 3 was noted. Two feet of cap rock from crosscut 5 to 4 then turns to solid sandstone was also noted.

RECEIVED

JUN 16 2004

DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

JUN 15 2004

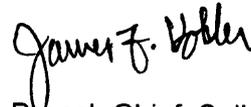
*McComing*  
*6/15/0018*

Following on-site inspection (report SWF012704), we agree with the Interwest assessment of the situation. If the longwall was to be pulled out at crosscut 4, the stage loader would have to be pushed further up the entry toward crosscut 3. Coal heights will not allow this large stager loader to fit through this area. The belt structure is in place and would have to be moved if further mining of the floor or roof was chosen to give additional height. The roof is a hard sandstone and would require either blasting or severe grinding with a continuous miner to get additional height (with resulting probable damage to the continuous miner). Also, advancing the longwall from crosscut 5 to 4 would require cutting 1 to 2 feet of cap rock at least at the headgate rib which would place ash content of the coal above 15 %. As requested by BLM, Interwest monitored and reported that the longwall face coal height has thinned as projected. Adding these factors together, the BLM agrees with pulling the longwall out at crosscut 5, and 23,000 tons of coal are no longer recoverable.

This approval of a minor modification to an existing R2P2 is Categorically Excluded from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis in that no new surface disturbance will occur from this action as stated in Overview of BLM's NEPA Process, February 1997, Appendix 2, page 2-7 (F)(7).

The modification of the R2P2 complies with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the regulations at 3480, and the lease terms and conditions and will achieve maximum economic recovery of the federal coal. Interwest's request to withdraw the longwall at crosscut 5 of 7<sup>th</sup> Right is approved as submitted. This written approval confirms verbal approval given earlier. A copy of the approved mine map is enclosed. If you have any questions, please contact Stephen Falk at the Price Field Office (435) 636-3605 or Jeff McKenzie of my staff at (801) 539-4038.

Sincerely,



Branch Chief, Solid Minerals

cc: UT-070, Price, Utah  
Utah Division of Oil Gas and Mining  
1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801  
Energy West Mining Company  
P. O. Box 310  
Huntington, Utah 84528