

BLACK BUTTE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS CONTEMPORARY MINING PROTOCOLS

Montana's history- part wonderful, part fascinating, and part problematic. This was the way of many mineral rich states that helped build our nation.

With no serious environmental regulation governing mining until the 1970s, early industrial activity left behind serious impacts. We look back on those early days questioning the decisions that were made, but also realizing that miners and other foundational industries used the best methods available to them at the time. Thankfully, this wonderful, fascinating, and problematic mining history also helped us learn and advance in remarkable ways. We've grown; we've invented and helped modernize our country; and we've learned how to create a regulatory structure around mining processes that protects both environmental and human values.

Today, with Tintina Resources recently submitting their revised Black Butte Project's application to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for review, we have a great opportunity to reflect on this progress and acknowledge the benefits that modern mining brings to our state. It's also time to demand reasoned and rational thinking about this project.

First, the DEQ has significantly revised its bonding process, which allows for no self-bonding and requires bonds to be completely reviewed/adjusted every five years to prevent taxpayers from having to assist in reclaiming sites after mining is complete. In fact, existing mine operations now fund legacy restoration projects through the Montana Metal-Mines Tax. We've also re-written our reclamation statutes ensuring that Montana mine design standards are second to none and created the strictest tailings impoundment statutes in the world. This is progress to be proud of.

Next, we should be proud that Montana is the only state to address the "boom and bust" nature of mining by creating the Hard Rock Mining Impact Act. This act recognizes that large mineral developments put a strain on local government services and requires a negotiated plan upfront addressing issues from an influx of school students, to increased ambulance/fire service needs, or anything else putting socio/economic pressure on effected communities. These plans must be completed prior to construction and are designed to meet needs before, during, and after the operating life of a mine.

Finally, Montana mines work closely with stakeholders and community groups ensuring they meet expectations of all neighbors. Modern mining companies recognize that they must not only meet or exceed our state's regulatory requirements, but that they must also earn a social license to operate.

When a new mine application is being evaluated by the DEQ, we have every right to expect our regulatory structure and processes to scrutinize and hold that applicant accountable to the standards we have established. We also have an obligation to be informed and hold each other accountable, collectively ensuring that our state is a place that seeks both the protection of our environment and the benefits of new wealth creation simultaneously.

The Black Butte Copper project is a great example of why finding that balance is so necessary. If you have real concerns about the project or are simply interested in learning more, go out and seek the answers to your questions. Give yourself the benefit of looking past a three word slogan and evaluate the merits of the project proposal yourself, and from more than one perspective. Tintina Resources, as open and transparent company as I have ever seen, is eager to listen to your questions and concerns. They provide frequent tours and are likely giving a presentation on their proposal somewhere in your area. If not, give them a call and request one, you'll be glad you did, I know I was.

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