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23 August 2024

Kevin Barnes, Permit Lead
Mining Act Reclamation Program
Mining and Minerals Division (MMD)
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: Modification 24-1 Minimal Impact Exploration Permit Application, American Magnesium Little Mountain Project, Permit No. LU047EM; NMDGF Project No. NMERT-3694.

Dear Mr. Barnes,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced minimal impact exploration project submitted by American Magnesium, LLC (AML). AML is proposing a permit modification that includes (1) changes in the routing and length of the access and overland roads, (2) the size of the staging area, and (3) the size and location of five drill pad sites. The exploration site is located approximately 13 miles southeast of Deming, New Mexico in Luna County. The total acreage that would be disturbed by the project is approximately 1.15 acres. Staff from the Department, MMD, New Mexico Environment Department, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and AML conducted a site inspection on 15 August 2024.

The switchback road that accesses drill pads BV3 and BV4, created in violation of the original Minimal Impact Exploration Permit issued by MMD, is already showing significant signs of erosion and downcutting. The lower portion of the road below the switchback contains the most highly-eroded areas. On the less steep section of road above the switchback, water has channeled off the roadcut and has begun eroding previously undisturbed habitat. The Department recommends that AML repair all the eroded areas prior to reinstating any drilling operations. It also recommends that the roadcut be redesigned to include water bars and berms to adequately control water flows and prevent excessive erosion from reoccurring.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the exploration permit modification. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Kellermueller, Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist, at (505) 270-6612 or ronald.kellermueller@dgf.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Virginia Seamster, Ph.D.
Assistant Chief for Technical Guidance, Ecological and Environmental Planning Section
cc: USFWS NMES Field Office