

Montana DEQ and Kootenai National Forest:

I attended the re-permitting meeting for the proposed revisions for the Revett Mine near Troy, MT., a few weeks ago. I didn't say anything at the time because I'm certainly not a mining expert. But driving home, I realized I am an expert on people of Lincoln County, on the Revett crew and the Revett operation and management.

I spent 2010 going door to door as I campaigned for the responsibility as representative to the Montana Legislature for House District 2, which includes most of rural Lincoln County, Eureka, and borders on both Libby and Troy populations. I spent January through April in Helena trying to help find jobs like these and operations like this one. I have visited with the director of DEQ and the KNF supervisor, so they know my feelings.

I personally know many of the miners employed at that copper mine. Guys like Paul Coon, Belvin Jellesed, Rod Thorstenson, Kelly Cannon and Robert Gonzales. I know how they think and how they work. They are the cream of the crop. I worked with them in the plywood plant in Libby. They were in my work crews. I have watched them grow and raise families. They care about their communities. They are proud of what they do.

I know how this company operates, and I know what employees think of this management team. I know what the community thinks of this company. This company does things right. When they make a mistake, they fix it quick. Not because some regulation says to but because their corporate culture is to do the right thing and to do things right.

As a decision maker and a policy maker, I know it is smart to consider their input. When you make your decisions on re-permitting, please don't leave the human factor out of the equation. Our families need good jobs. Our state needs taxpayers. Our environment needs operators like Revett. You agency officials need folks like these.

How often do you schedule a two hour meeting that draws a crowd like the one I attended? It was a good natured crowd, proud of this operation. There was no rock throwing, no critics, no disgruntled employees, no complaining environmentalists. It was just a bunch of good community people backing up a popular company. It got over quickly because people had no complaints.

Most Montana communities dream of an operation like this coming to their home town.

I remember meetings years ago when this mine was proposed by ASARCO, and I recall all the doomsday stories about boom and bust with an environmental disaster left behind. Look around us today. This is a great mine operated

by a great crew who have great pride in how their company does things.

Thank you for accepting my comments to the proposed revisions to the Troy Revised Reclamation Plan preferred alternative. I have just a couple of suggestions for you before you make your final determination.

--Let asphalt remain on the main road leading to the mine site. Removing it and returning it to dirt will just create more BMP work trying to mitigate for TMDL's in the watershed. Repair it as needed.

--Using the readily available materials that is suitable for growth medium located on the mine to reclaim the tailing impoundment would be the better option. The topsoil that has been saved for that purpose has become great habitat for the western toad. Using the other material instead will grow the trees and shrubs necessary to ensure proper reclamation.

--Breaking up the foundations and burying the concrete onsite makes sense rather than digging them up, breaking them up and burying them somewhere else. It's just concrete and won't impact water quality any more than the rip rap along the Bull Trout stream at the bottom of the mountain.

--Keep the pipeline above ground. Don't disturb an entire hillside to bury the line and create a potential future complication if the line were to need replacement or repair later on.

I realize my comments are lengthy, but they are sincere. They reflect my personal feelings, as well as my official position as state representative for House District 2. I trust they will be read and seriously considered. Issue the new permit without unreasonable demands.

Respectfully yours,

Rep. Mike Cuffe,

Montana House District 2