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# State of Utah

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

MICHAEL R. STYLER
*Executive Director*

**Division of Oil, Gas and Mining**

JOHN R. BAZA
*Division Director*

October 28, 2010

TO: Informal Rules Review Group

THROUGH: John R. Baza, Director JB

FROM: Steve Schneider, Administrative Services & Policy Coordinator Steve

SUBJECT: Solicitation of Comments on Minerals Program Rule Amendments, Annual Fees and Reports Deadlines, Informal Rulemaking Process

This letter is written to seek your comments on a Minerals Program rule proposal primarily to consolidate annual fees and annual reports to one consistent due date of January 31. The Division is seeking process efficiencies in this proposal and does not foresee a negative impact upon the permittees or the public at large. The Board of Oil, Gas & Mining was briefed at their public meeting on October 27, 2010 prior to this rule proposal proceeding to the Informal Rules Review Group for comments.

The attached proposed rule amendments reflect changes in three areas, as follows:

1. Delay of the deadline for an Exploration Progress Report from December 31 to January 31, thus establishing one consistent deadline for all annual reports.
2. Delay of the annual fee deadline in July for all permittees until the annual reports are due, i.e. January 31. The Division would still collect the annual fee in the same state fiscal year.
3. Correct one word in the Small Mining Operations rule, R647-3-105, which currently requires an operations map to include "exploration" activities and the proper term should be "small mining" activities in this rule. Maps of exploration activities are required in the Exploration rule at R647-2-105.

Please take this opportunity to review this proposal and provide a response to Steve Schneider by **November 29, 2010**, if you desire. Consideration will be made of your comments prior to proceeding with formal rulemaking with the Board. I can be reached by e-mail at steveschneider@utah.gov or by telephone at 801-538-5328 if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

Attachment

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UTAH DNR OIL, GAS & MINING

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**R647-2. Exploration.**

R647-2-101. Filing Requirements and Review Procedures.

1. Prior to the commencement of exploration, a Notice of Intention to Conduct Exploration (FORM MR-EXP) containing all the required information must be filed with and determined complete by the Division and the Division shall have approved the form and amount of reclamation surety. It is recommended that the notice of intention be filed with the Division at least 30 days prior to the planned commencement of exploration.

2. Within 15 days after receipt of a Notice of Intention to Conduct Exploration (FORM MR-EXP), the Division will review the proposal and notify the operator in writing that the notice of intention is:

2.11. Complete and all required information has been submitted; or

2.12. Incomplete, and additional information as identified by the Division will be required.

The Division will review and respond to any subsequent filings of information within 10 working days of receipt.

3. If more than five acres of disturbance are planned, a detailed exploration development and reclamation plan must be included in the notice of intention and approved by the Division.

4. The Division will review and approve or disapprove:

4.11. The form and amount of reclamation surety, and;

4.12. Any variances requested under R647-2-107, 108, or 109, regardless of the number of surface acres of disturbance planned.

5. Developmental drilling conducted within an already approved disturbed area with approved surety does not require submittal of a Notice of Intention to Conduct Exploration (FORM MR-EXP).

6. A permittee's retention of a notice of intention shall require the paying of permit fees as authorized by the Utah Legislature. The procedures for paying the permit fees are as follows:

6.11. The Division shall notify the operators of record annually of the amount of permit fees authorized by the Utah Legislature for Exploration.

6.12. Fees are due ~~[beginning July 31, 1998 and thereafter annually, by the last Friday of July as authorized by the Utah Legislature]~~ annually by the deadline in R647-2-115 for reports.

6.13. A permittee may avoid payment of the fee by complying with the following requirements:

6.13.11. A permittee will notify the Division of a desire to close out a notice of intention by checking the appropriate box of the permit fees billing form.

6.13.12. The permittee will then arrange with the Division for an onsite inspection of the site to assure that all required reclamation has been performed. If an inspection reveals that an area is not yet suitably reclaimed, then a new billing notice will be issued and the permittee will be given 30 days from the date of the onsite inspection to pay the fee.

*(R647-2-102 to R647-2-114 not shown to reduce document length)*

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R647-2-115. Reports.

On or before [~~December~~]January 31st of [~~the year of filing of a Notice of Intention to Conduct Exploration (FORM MR-EXP)~~]each year, the operator conducting exploration must submit a Mineral Exploration Progress Report (FORM MR-EPR), which describes any unusual drilling conditions, water encountered, hole plugging measures, and reclamation activities conducted.

R647-2-116. Practices and Procedures; Appeals.

The Administrative Procedures, as outlined in R647-5, shall be applicable to minerals regulatory proceedings.

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**R647-3. Small Mining Operations.**

R647-3-101. Filing Requirements and Review Procedures.

1. Prior to commencement of operations, a Notice of Intention to Commence Small Mining Operations (FORM MR-SMO) containing all the required information must be filed with and determined complete by the Division and the Division shall have approved the form and amount of reclamation surety. It is recommended that the notice of intention be filed with the Division at least thirty (30) days prior to the planned commencement of operations.

2. Within 15 days after receipt of a Notice of Intention, the Division will review the proposal and notify the operator in writing;

2.11. That the notice of intention is complete and all required information has been submitted; or,

2.12. That the notice of intention is incomplete, and additional information as identified by the Division will be required.

2.12.111. The Division will review and respond to any subsequent filings of information within 10 working days of receipt.

3. The Division will review and approve or disapprove:

3.11. The form and amount of reclamation surety (R647-3-111), and

3.12. All variances requested from Rules R647-3-107, 108, and 109, regardless of the number of surface acres of disturbance planned.

4. The operator must notify the Division no later than 30 days after beginning small mining operations.

5. A permittee's authorization under a notice of intention to conduct small mining operations shall require the paying of permit fees as authorized by the Utah Legislature. The procedures for paying the permit fees are as follows:

5.11. The Division shall notify the operators of record annually of the amount of permit fees authorized by the Utah Legislature for

5.11.11. Small Mining Operations (less than 5 disturbed acres)

5.12. Fees are due ~~[beginning July 31, 1998 and thereafter annually, by the last Friday of July as authorized by the Utah Legislature]~~ annually by the deadline in R647-3-117 for reports.

6. A permittee may avoid payment of the fee by complying with the following requirements:

6.11. A permittee will notify the Division of a desire to close out a notice of intention by checking the appropriate box of the permit fees billing form.

6.12. The permittee will then arrange with the Division for an onsite inspection of the site to assure that all required reclamation has been performed. If an inspection reveals that an area is not yet suitably reclaimed, then a new billing notice will be issued and the permittee will be given 30 days from the date of the onsite inspection to pay the fee.

*(R647-3-102 to 104 and R647-3-106 to 116 not shown to reduce document length)*

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R647-3-105. Project Location and Map.

The notice of intention shall include a location map and an operations map. Each map shall be plotted at a scale to accurately identify locational landmarks and operations details.

1. The general location map shall be the scale of a USGS 7.5 minute series map or equivalent (1"=2000') and identify new or existing access roads.

2. The operations map (1"=200' or other scale as determined necessary by the Division) shall identify:

2.11. The area to be disturbed;

2.12. The location of any existing or proposed operations including access roads, drill holes, trenches, pits, shafts, cuts, or other planned [~~exploration~~]small mining activities; and

2.13. Any adjacent previous disturbance for which the operator is not responsible.

*(DOGM Notation: R647-3-105 pertains to small mining operations, and "exploration" is incorrectly shown in existing rule R647-3-105.2.12. Wording change to "small mining" is appropriate.)*

R647-3-117. Reports.

1. On or before January 31 of each year, unless waived in writing by the Division, each operator conducting small mining operations must file an operations and progress report (FORM MR-AR) describing its operations during the preceding calendar year, including:

1.11. The location of the operation and the number and date of the applicable Notice of Intention;

1.12. The gross amounts of ore and waste materials moved during the year, as well as the disposition of such materials;

1.13. New surface disturbances created during the year;

1.14. The reclamation work performed during the year.

2. The operator shall keep and maintain timely records relating to his performance under the Act and still make these records available to the Division upon request.

R647-3-118. Practices and Procedures; Appeals.

The Administrative Procedures, as outlined in the R647-5 Rules, shall be applicable to minerals regulatory proceedings.

R647-3-119. Confidential Information.

Information provided in the notice of intention relating to the location, size, and nature of the mineral deposit, and marked confidential by the operator, shall be protected as confidential information by the Board and the Division. The information will not be a matter of public record until a written release is received from the operator, or until the notice of intention is terminated.

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**R647-4. Large Mining Operations.**

R647-4-101. Filing Requirements and Review Procedures.

Prior to commencement of operations, a Notice of Intention to Commence Large Mining Operations (FORM MR-LMO) containing all the required information must be filed with and approved by the Division and the Division shall have approved the form and amount of reclamation surety.

1. Within 30 days after receipt of a Notice of Intention, or within 30 days after receipt of any subsequent submittal, the Division will complete its review and notify the operator in writing:

1.11. That the notice of intention is complete; or

1.12. That the notice of intention is incomplete, and that additional information as identified by the Division will be required.

2. Within 30 days after receipt of the notice of intention or within 30 days following the last action of the operator or Division on the notice of intention, the Division shall reach a tentative decision with respect to the approval or denial of the notice of intention.

Notice of the tentative decision will then be published in accordance with Rule R647-4-116.

3. Division approval of the notice of intention and execution of the Reclamation Contract (FORM MR-RC) by the operator shall bind the Division and the operator in accordance with the Act and implementing regulations; and, shall enable the operator to conduct mining and reclamation activities in accordance therewith.

4. The operator must notify the Division within 30 days of beginning mining operations.

5. A permittee's retention of an approved notice of intention shall require the paying of permit fees as authorized by the Utah Legislature. The procedures for paying the permit fees are as follows:

5.11. The Division shall notify the operators of record annually of the amount of permit fees authorized by the Utah Legislature for the following notices of intention.

5.11.11. Large Mining Operations (less than 50 acres) (fees calculated on the disturbed acreage permitted/bonded).

5.11.12. Large Mining Operations (greater than 50 acres) (fees calculated on the disturbed acreage permitted/bonded).

5.12. Fees are due ~~[beginning July 31, 1998 and thereafter annually, by the last Friday of July as authorized by the Utah Legislature]~~ annually by the deadline in R647-4-121 for reports.

5.13. A permittee may avoid payment of the fee by complying with the following requirements:

5.13.11. A permittee will notify the Division of a desire to close out a notice of intention by checking the appropriate box of the permit fees billing form.

5.13.12. The permittee will then arrange with the Division for an onsite inspection of the site to assure that all required reclamation has been performed. If an inspection reveals that an area is not yet suitably reclaimed, then a new billing notice will be issued and the permittee will be given 30 days from the date of the onsite inspection to pay the fee.

*(R647-4-102 to R647-4-120 not shown to reduce document length)*

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R647-4-121. Reports.

1. On or before January 31 of each year, unless waived in writing by the Division, each operator conducting large mining operations must file an Annual Report of Mining Operations (FORM MR-AR) describing its operations during the preceding calendar year. Form MR-AR, includes:

1.11. The location of the operation and file number of the approved notice of intention;

1.12. The gross amounts of ore and waste materials moved during the year, as well as the disposition of such materials;

1.13. The reclamation work performed during the year and new surface disturbances created during the year.

2. The operator shall include an updated map depicting surface disturbance and reclamation performed during the year, prepared in accordance with Rule R647-4-105.

3. The operator shall keep and maintain timely records relating to his performance under the Act, and shall make these records available to the Division upon request.

R647-4-122. Practices and Procedures; Appeals.

The Administrative Procedures, as outlined in the R647-5 Rules, shall be applicable to minerals regulatory proceedings.

*(DOGM Notation: The objective of modifying the fee deadlines is to create more efficiency for the division and the operator. Annual reports and fees will now be due on one consistent date. The collection of the fee is being delayed approximately six months from the end of July to January 31, but the annual fees will still be collected in the same fiscal year for the state, July 1 – June 30.)*