

Analysis

Item 33: Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

Chemical Process Mining Coordinator

Analyst: John Terpening

Request: Establish a limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 4 position (0.16 FTE) to serve as the Chemical Process Mining Coordinator and assist with project management of the Grassy Mountain chemical process mining project for the remainder of the biennium.

Analysis: The Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) Mined Land Regulation and Reclamation (MLRR) program is required by statute to oversee the state's mineral production. As part of that role, the MLRR program is overseeing the first chemical mine permitting process to occur in Oregon, at a location in Malheur County commonly referred to as Grassy Mountain.

The MLRR program has not had the internal capacity to provide direct oversight to the Grassy Mountain project, and as a result has attempted other remedies in recent years, including receiving a position on loan from the Department of Environmental Quality and utilizing contractors to administer the process. Neither of these options were able to provide the intended benefit and as such, the MLRR program manager has taken on direct oversight responsibilities. While this has greatly improved the process for both sides, resulting in timely and transparent invoicing and routine reimbursements, it is not a sustainable option for the continuation of the Grassy Mountain project or for the MLRR program's other regulatory responsibilities.

The Department is requesting a part-time limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 4 position to serve as the project coordinator. This position would work exclusively on the Grassy Mountain project at roughly three-quarters time for the final five months of the current biennium, allowing the MLRR program manager to return to overall program oversight. The regulation and oversight costs to the Department for the chemical mining process, including the requested limited duration position, are reimbursed under contract by the mining company and would not be paid for with other program fees.

The Department's second-year funding has already provided additional Other Funds limitation that was originally intended for utilization of contractors, but could now be applied to the position costs, so no additional limitation is necessary for this request.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board authorize the establishment of a limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 4 position (0.16 FTE) for the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to serve as the Chemical Process Mining Coordinator within the Mined Land Regulation and Reclamation program.

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Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
Klein

Request: Establish one new, part-time, limited duration Natural Resources Specialist 4 position, phased in on February 1, 2020 (0.21 full-time equivalent).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Mineral Land Regulation and Reclamation (MLRR) program oversees the state's mineral production and in recent years has been charged with overseeing chemical mine processing for the state. Workload associated with the chemical mining application process has increased significantly and the Department must adhere to statutory timelines for application processing.

Up to this point, the project management workload has been absorbed by current staff and contracted professional services. Funding for the chemical mine processing application is reimbursed by the applicant and is not funded by regular fee payers. Adding a limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 4 position will allow the Department to have dedicated oversight of the chemical mine application process to ensure timelines are met and also allow existing staff to refocus on regular operational duties within MLRR. The Department has stated it has sufficient Other Funds expenditure limitation for the part-time, limited duration position.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

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November 2, 2020

Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
Representative Tina Kotek, Co-Chair
State Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The purpose of this letter is to request approval for a limited duration 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) position (January 2021 – June 2021) for the Mineral Land Regulation and Reclamation (MLRR) program within the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI).

The MLRR program oversees the state's mineral production and works to minimize impacts of mineral resource extraction and to maximize the opportunities for land reclamation. This position, a Natural Resource Specialist 4 (NRS 4 – Chemical Process Mining Coordinator) will facilitate coordination and project management related to Calico/Grassy Mountain, a fully cost-recoverable chemical process mining project.

Action Requested

The department is requesting approval for one full-time limited duration NRS 4 position. DOGAMI does not need to request additional limitation.

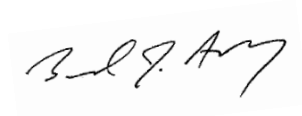
Legislation Affected

No legislation is affected with this request.

Co-Chairpersons
November 2, 2020
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Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact me at 971-673-1550.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad J. Avy", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Brad J. Avy
Director

cc: Ken Rocco, Legislative Fiscal Officer
George Naughton, Chief Financial Officer
Amira Streeter, Governor's Office
John Terpening, Legislative Fiscal Office
Renee Klein, Chief Financial Office