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DEQ Withdraws Proposed Decision on Kennecott Mining Application

The Department of Environmental Quality announced today that it has withdrawn its proposed decision to approve a permit for the Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company to conduct mining operations at the proposed Eagle Project Mine. The decision was made after discovering that two reports on the structural integrity of the mine were not properly made part of the public record or given a comprehensive technical review.

As a result, there has been an insufficient opportunity for the entire mining team and DEQ management to review the additional technical reports and determine their significance from a technical, legal, and policy perspective.

“This department has committed itself to making this process as open and transparent as possible,” said DEQ Director Steven E. Chester. “In light of this information, we must allow the needed time for ourselves, as well as the public, to give it the appropriate review.”

Director Chester also announced that the public hearings, scheduled for March 6-8 in Marquette and March 12 in Lansing, will be postponed and rescheduled at a later date.

“I regret that canceling the hearings at this time may create an inconvenience for those who were planning to attend, but it is critical for us to gain a better understanding of the situation before we engage in that important part of this process,” added Director Chester.

In addition to a technical review of the reports, the department will be undertaking an extensive procedural review to determine how these documents were not immediately given the proper consideration and to ensure that there is a complete public record of information related to the mining proposal and its review. During this review, affected staff will be reassigned to other projects.

The DEQ will share the findings of its review with the public as that information becomes available, and the technical reports will be posted on the DEQ's Web site at www.michigan.gov/deqogs, then click on Kennecott Eagle Project.

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Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

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