

MINUTE ITEM

This Calendar Item No. 29
was approved as Minute Item
No. 29 by the State Lands
Commission by a vote of 3
to 0 at its 2/22/79
meeting.

CALENDAR ITEM

2/79
W 40080
Smith

CERTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE DECLARATION
FOR A MINUTE PERMIT

APPLICANT:

California
State Lands Commission
Regional Offices
Central Office
Sacramento, California 94666

TYPE OF LAND:

State Land (reserved mineral interest).

AREA AND LOCATION:

1/4 SW 1/4, 1/4 SE 1/4, NW 1/4 SE 1/4, SW 1/4 NE 1/4 SE 1/4,
SW 1/4 NE 1/4 SE 1/4 SW 1/4, SE 1/4 NE 1/4 SW 1/4,
Section 36, T48S, R14E, SBB&M. The parcel
is located halfway between Indio and Blythe,
and approximately 12 miles northwest of
Pescadero, Calif.

PROPOSAL:

To determine the potential occurrence of
an iron ore deposit of iron ore. The area
is currently a large open pit iron ore
mine operation of Kaiser Steel. The surface
of the subject property is owned by Kaiser
and has been used for disposal of waste
rock.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

The exploration program will consist of
20,000 feet of diamond core drilling, in
vertical holes spaced on cross sections
200 feet apart.

PREREQUISITE CARRIES:

The State Lands Commission's staff,
in compliance with Article 10, Section
10100 of the Cal. Adm. Code, has
conducted an initial study and has
determined that the project will not
have a significant effect on the environ-
ment. Therefore, in compliance with
Section 2905, a negative
declaration was prepared and filed
with the State Clearinghouse.

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2. The State Clearinghouse acknowledged receipt of the negative declaration and has completed the required review.
3. In accordance with Chapter 1200, Statutes of 1977, the State Lands Commission must complete and certify a negative declaration within 105 days following receipt of a completed application and approve or deny the project within 1 year. This application was certified complete as of November 20, 1978.

EXHIBIT: A. Negative Declaration.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. DETERMINE THAT AN EIR HAS NOT BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT BUT THAT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION HAS BEEN PREPARED BY THE COMMISSION'S STAFF.
2. CERTIFY THAT NEGATIVE DECLARATION ND #235 HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA OF 1970, AS AMENDED, AND THE STATE GUIDELINES; AND THAT THE COMMISSION HAS REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.
3. DETERMINE THAT THE PROPOSED PROJECT WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

EXHIBIT A

NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Kaiser Steel Corporation
W-40080

This Negative Declaration is prepared by the State Lands Commission in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

The Kaiser Steel corporation proposes to conduct a mineral exploration program within the Eagle Mountain area of Riverside County. More specifically, a portion of the SE 1/4 of Section 36, T.3S., R.14E., S.B.M. (see attached Exhibit A). Of primary interest is the potential occurrence of an economic deposit of iron ore.

The Initial Study upon which this Negative Declaration is based, was prepared by the State Lands Commission's staff incorporating data submitted by the applicant.

The Initial Study was circulated for review as a means of fulfilling the consultation requirements of Sections 15066, 15080, and 15083 of the State EIR Guidelines. No adverse comments were received during such consultation. A list of those persons contacted is attached for your information.

An archaeological assessment of the project site was conducted by Mr. James D. Swenson, Senior Staff Archaeologist for the University of California at Riverside. His conclusion was that approval of the proposal will have no direct or indirect adverse impacts on cultural resources of the area. A copy of such assessment is on file in the Commission's office.

Based upon such Initial Study, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

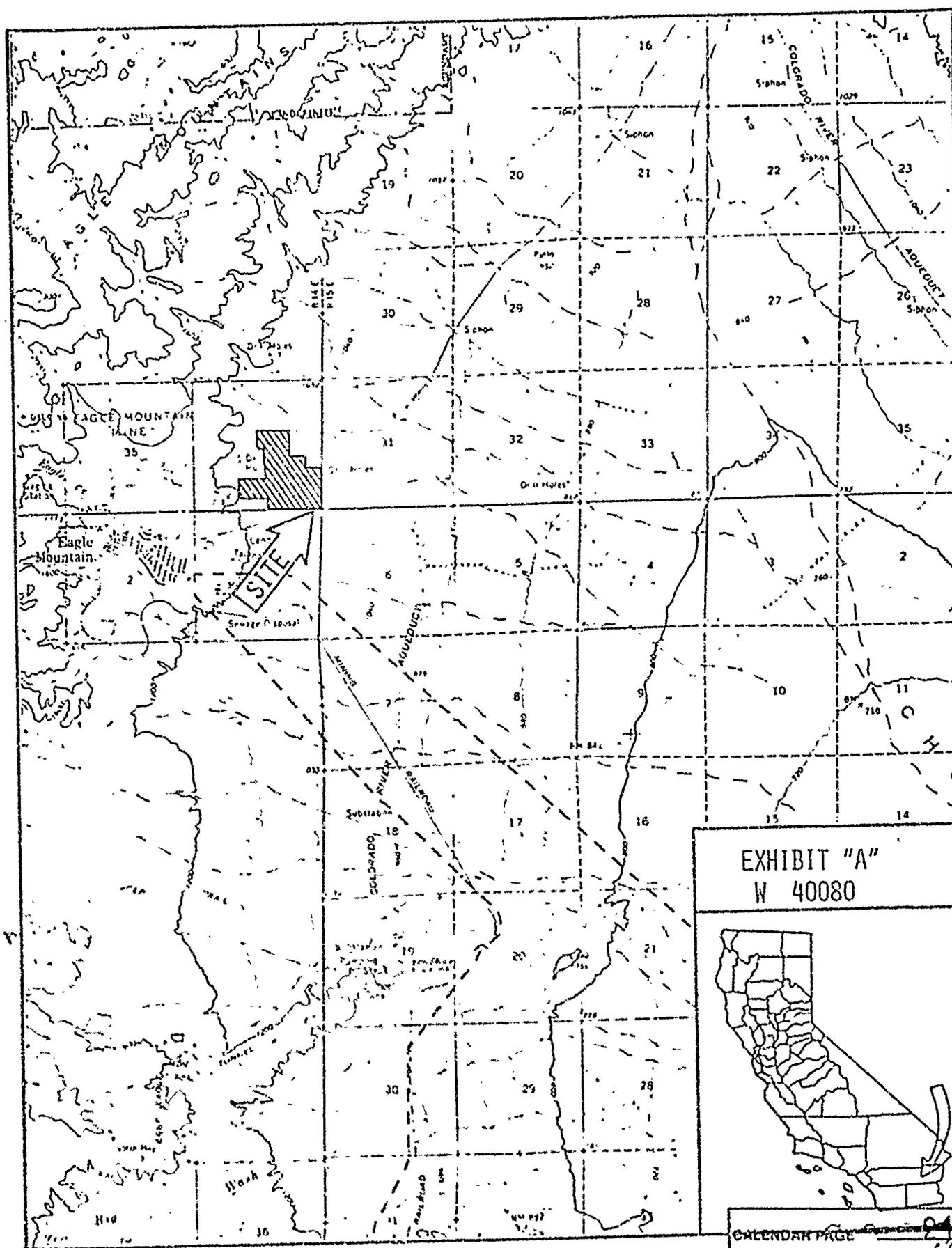


EXHIBIT "A"
W 40080



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MAILING LIST

W 40030

MEMO SENT TO THESE

September 22, 1978

1. Colorado River Basin Region Water Quality Control Board
73-271 Highway 111, Suite 21
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(714) 348-7491
2. Department of Parks and Recreation
1200 K Street Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-7067
3. Department of Fish and Game
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-3535
4. Solid Waste Management Board
1709 - 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 322-4915
5. Department of Transportation
1120 "N" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-9025
6. Mr. Steven Rios
Executive Secretary
Native American Heritage Commission
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
7. Ms. Laurie Wright
Office of Planning & Research
1400 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
8. California Division of Mines & Geology
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Mr. James Taylor, Senior Geologist

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PROSPECTING PERMITS
W 40080
IRON ORE

(1) Project and Its Location

The name of the project is "Application for a Prospecting Permit for part of Section 36, Eagle Mountain, California". The site is located approximately 12 miles north-northwest of Desert Center via County Road R-2. The site consists of 150 acres in Section 36, Range 14 East, Township 3 South, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian. The site is outlined on the attached map.

(2) Statement of the Objectives Sought by the Proposed Project

A permit for mineral prospecting and a preferential lease for Kaiser Steel Corporation.

(3) General Description of the Project

The proposed prospecting program will consist of 20,000 ft. of diamond core drilling in vertical holes spaced on cross sections 100 ft. apart. The alluvial ore in this area is largely confined to a deep backed canyon trending eastward from the existing pit. The ore represents the lower 100 to 350 feet of canyon fill and is overlain by 200 to 400 feet of barren gravels. Although the alluvium is confined by steep, irregular canyon walls to the east, the canyon broadens considerably beyond the eastern wall of the existing pit. This results in a thinning of the alluvial ore zone. If ore is proven from this drilling program, within economic open pit limits, the existing pit will be extended about 600 ft. to the East and South. Previous drilling has indicated about 20 million tons of probable ore on the site.

(4) (a) Description of the Environmental Setting

The lands in the prospect area are in a very remote and mountainous location. The majority of the land in the vicinity is undeveloped and consists of barren mountains and desert. It is typical of the Lower Colorado Desert with extremely high temperatures and minimal rainfall.

The flora in the area consists of scattered sage and cactus. There are no trees or grasses. The rocky nature of the surface precludes any significant plant life. The animal life consists primarily of desert lizards, some snakes and occasional coyotes, at night.

(4) (b) Water Quality Aspects

The proposed prospecting and mining in the area would have no effect on water quality in the area. Previous drilling in the area has indicated no water table. Also, mining in the adjacent pit has not encountered ground water.

(5) Assessment of Impact

There is no impact on the environment

(6) Significant Environmental Effects Project

The 150 acres involved in this application is approximately one-third covered with waste rock from previous mining operations. Another one-third of the area has been utilized for mine development; i.e. roads, stripping benches, maintenance areas, parking areas, etc. Perhaps forty acres would be classified as undisturbed desert land.

The area is bounded by tailing pond dikes on the South, waste rock dumps on the North, operating open pit on the West and open to the desert on the East. The nearest point from which the public might view the site is from one mile away along the H.W.D. Colorado, Aqueduct road.

Prospecting and mining in the area would have no direct or indirect impact on the environment. Mining in the adjacent pit would only be expanded a few hundred feet which would be insignificant compared to the existing pit.

(7) Any Significant Environmental Effects Which Cannot Be Avoided If the Proposal is Implemented

None.

(8) Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize the Significant Environmental Effects

None.

(9) Alternatives to the Proposed Action

If the proposed application is denied there would be no prospecting or mining in the area and the mine-life would be reduced by two years.

(10) The Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

The proposed project would cause an enlargement to an existing pit. The flora and fauna will continue as in the past, whether the project is implemented or not.

If the project is postponed for an indefinite period, technology and the economy may be substantially different, possibly forgoing any development in the area. If the mining in the present pit is concluded in a few years and the area remains idle for some time, then if mining is resumed at a later date, it might have an impact on the environment.

(11) Any Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Involved in the Proposed Action Should it be Implemented

At the present time, it is unknown if any irreversible environmental changes will occur, other than the enlargement of the existing pit, if the proposed project is implemented.

(12) The Growth-inducing Impact of the Proposed Action

Since 1948 open pit iron ore mining has been conducted in a large pit adjacent to the project site. Approximately 200 million tons of material have been removed from the pit and mining is planned to continue for the immediate future at the rate of 5 million tons annually.

Approval of the proposed project could extend the life of mine operations two years. This would provide economic support for the community of Eagle Mountain and the surrounding area and continued employment for about 1300 people. In the event a development phase is justified as a result of this exploration a separate environmental document shall be prepared.

(13) Energy Conservation

It is unknown if any energy conservation might be achieved by implementing the proposed project.

(14) Organizations and Persons Consulted

This report was prepared by the Staff of the State Lands Commission using their expertise and data submitted by this applicant.

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