CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
20 JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS
FOR
US MINE CORPORATION
US MINE CORPORATION IONE PLANT
AMADOR COUNTY
TENTATIVE WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS
AND
MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

In the 9 April 2025 Notice of Public Hearing, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) staff circulated the Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) and Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Orders for the US Mine Ione Plant (Facility) in Amador County with the intent of consideration by the Central Valley Water Board at a public hearing held on 19/20 June 2025.

This document contains responses to written comments received from interested persons regarding the tentative WDR and MRP Orders. Written comments were required by public notice to be received by the Central Valley Water Board by 9 May 2025 5 p.m. to receive full consideration.

Timely comments were received from **the US Mine Corporation**. Comments were accepted into the record and are summarized below (COMMENT), followed by Central Valley Water Board staff responses (WB RESPONSE).

Other changes by the Central Valley Water Board staff are described at the end. In addition, staff made minor changes to the tentative WDRs to improve clarity and fix typographical errors.

US Mine Corporation Comments and Responses

1. Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2025-XXXX

The main change the Discharger is proposing is to add four more lanes of CDB Ponds (CDB Ponds 6-9). Specific comments are provided below.

COMMENT

- *Page 2, Table 1: Add "CDB Ponds 6-9" next to "CDB Ponds 3-5"*

WB RESPONSE: Concur. As shown in the excerpt from Table 1 below, "CDB Ponds 3-5" were changed to "Phase 2 CDB Ponds 3-9", and the size was changed from 20 to 60 acres. A row was added to describe the planned Upper Decant Pond which is to serve CDB Ponds 6-9.

Mining Unit	Size (acres)	Unit description	Status
Phase 2 CDB Ponds 3- 9	60	Proposed sets of clay settling ponds; lined by two feet of compacted clay	Planned
Upper Decant Pond	8	To collect decant water from the proposed CDB Ponds 6-9; lined by two feet of compacted clay	Planned

COMMENT

- Page 3, 5.b: Change "Area B" to "Area 2"

WB RESPONSE: Concur, the correction was made. The reference to "Attachment A and G" was changed to "Attachment B".

COMMENT

- Page 3, 6.b: Add "CDB Ponds 6-9"

WB RESPONSE: Concur. We changed "CDB Ponds 3-5" to CDB Ponds 3-9 and the Upper Decant Pond to collect decant water from CDB Ponds 6-9".

COMMENT

- Page 13, Finding 50: Add "…and four separate lanes (termed CDB-6, CDB-7, CDB-8, and CDB-9) located approximately 1,000-1,500 feet east of the former" at the end of the section but before "(Attachments H and L)"

WB RESPONSE: Concur. The following language was added to Finding 50:

"In their 9 May 2025 Response to Comments, the Discharger proposed to expand Phase 2 to four additional lanes (termed CDB-6, CDB-7, CDB-8, and

CDB-9) located approximately 1,000-1,500 feet east of CDB Ponds 1-5 **(Attachments G** and **H**). In conjunction, they proposed to construct an Upper Decant Pond to collect decant water from the CDB Ponds 6-9 **(Attachments G** and **H**).

"Attachments H and L" were corrected to "Attachments G and H".

In addition to changes made to Finding 50, "(CDB 3-5)" was changed to "(CDB Ponds 3-9 and Upper Decant Pond)" on the Information Sheet.

COMMENT

- Page 22, Requirement A.6: Add "CDB-6, CDB-7, CDB-8, and CDB-9"

WB RESPONSE: Concur. The word "new" was replaced with "Phase 2", and the proposed language was added.

COMMENT

- Page 27, Requirement H.3: Add "geologist" along with "engineering geologist" and "civil engineer"

WB RESPONSE: Language allowing a Registered California Geologist was added to approve certain reports consistent with the Business and Professions Code was added.

COMMENT

- Revised maps for pages 33, 38, and a new map to be inserted after page 39 have been attached to this letter. These maps include the additional clay drying beds (CDB-6 thorough -9) and Area 1 and Area 2.

WB RESPONSE: Concur. The maps on pages 33 (Attachment B) and 38 (Attachment G) were replaced with maps provided. The conceptual design of CDB Ponds 6-9 was inserted as a second part of Attachment H after page 39 (Attachment H, continued). "CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF" was added to the title of Attachment H.

2. Tentative Monitoring and Reporting Order R5-2025-XXXX

COMMENT

- Page 8, Table 6: Remove "Turbidity" from the list of parameters required from surface impoundments. This was not required in the past. Total suspended solids, total dissolved solids, and electrical conductivity should be sufficient to characterize the impoundment water.

WB RESPONSE: Concur, turbidity was removed from the list of parameters.

Other Changes

Language was added to allow the discharger to accept tertiary treated Title 22 compliant water from the City of Ione.

Original Discharge Specification B.5 states:

5. The Discharger may replace some or all or some of raw Amador Water Agency water needed to supplement onsite processing water with the tertiary recycled water supplied by the same agency.

Revised Discharge Specification B.5:

5. The Discharger may replace some or all of raw Amador Water Agency water needed to supplement onsite processing water with Title 22 compliant tertiary recycled water supplied by the same agency, or by the City of Ione, provided that the Discharger acquires any permits that may be required. This Order does not include reclamation requirements pursuant to Title 22. Prior to using tertiary-treated recycled water, the recycled water producer (i.e. City of Ione) must apply for and receive coverage under State Water Board Order WQ 2016-0068-DDW, Water Reclamation Requirements for Recycled Water Use (Reclamation General Order). As part of the application for the Reclamation General Order, the recycled water producer must provide a Title 22 Engineering Report approved by DDW, which describes the recycled water use to be used at this facility