

Environmental Permitting Update for Southern Empire's Oro Cruz Project

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VANCOUVER, March 7, 2022 - [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#) (Southern Empire)(TSXV:SMP)(Frankfurt:5RE)(OTCQB:SMPEF) announces that the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has published a "Notice of Intent" in the U.S. Federal Register and issued a press release related to environmental permitting of proposed surface exploration activities at Southern Empire's Oro Cruz Project located in Imperial County, California. These BLM actions officially notify the public of the BLM's intent to complete an environmental review that will "analyze potential impacts to the natural, cultural and recreation resources from the proposed exploration activities" and initiate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) permitting processes. In addition, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Imperial County Planning Department (ICPD) has formally started analysis of the Oro Cruz Project through the preparation of an Initial Study (IS).

Dale Wallster, CEO of Southern Empire stated, "The BLM publication is a major milestone for us and I thank all those involved in moving our Oro Cruz Project forward. The BLM and ICPD decisions to initiate their NEPA and CEQA environmental review processes bring Southern Empire closer to receiving authorizations to start our exploration at Oro Cruz. We look forward to working closely with both the BLM and the ICPD to ensure compliance with all federal and state environmental permitting requirements and we invite commentary from all stakeholders in the region through the upcoming NEPA and CEQA public processes."

The NEPA permitting process will include the BLM's preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) related to Southern Empire's exploration Plan of Operations (Plan) that was submitted to the BLM's El Centro Field Office on September 28, 2020, and determined, by the BLM, to be administratively and technically complete and consistent with U.S. federal regulations on November 16, 2021.

The Plan proposes specific surface mineral exploration activities, only disturbing up to 8.3 hectares (20.5 acres) within an approximately 253-hectare (approximately 626 acres) portion of the Oro Cruz property located within the 184,500-acre Picacho Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Imperial County. All exploration activities are to be conducted so as to avoid unnecessary and undue degradation to public lands and resources.

As required by NEPA, the above-noted BLM actions have started an initial 30-day public scoping process that began on March 04, 2022. Publication by the BLM of its draft EA will be followed by an additional 30-day public review period during which the public's substantive comments will be solicited regarding the Plan. Only after this subsequent review of the draft EA will the BLM make a final decision regarding authorization of the proposed activities in the Plan. For more information, please see the BLM's news release of March 4, 2022.

During the CEQA process, the ICPD will also seek public input on multiple occasions prior to adoption of the CEQA determination and decision.

Proposed Surface Exploration Work Pursuant to the BLM-Approved Plan of Operations:

- Establishment of 65 drill pads to support surface exploration in seven drill target areas.
- Reverse Circulation (RC) and/or core drilling of up to 65 drill holes.
- Construction of approximately 2.94 kilometres (km; 1.83 miles) of new, permanent access roads; approximately 9.98 km (6.2 miles) of temporary drill site access roads; and approximately 4.21 km (2.62 miles) of improvements to existing roads.
- Creation of a 1.05 hectare (2.6-acre) staging area at the Cross Mine underground portal for infrastructure related to future underground and surface exploration.

Summary of the Oro Cruz Exploration Project Permitting Process:

- The Plan was deemed complete for proposed surface exploration located within the Picacho ACEC.
- Biological, cultural, and hydrological baseline studies have been completed in preparation for analysis in the environmental permitting processes.
- The BLM has published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register and distributed a related press release to initiate the NEPA-required public scoping process for the solicitation of public comments related to the preparation of the anticipated EA. The 30-day public scoping period began on March 04, 2022.
- A Reclamation Plan for compliance with the State of California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) has been submitted to the ICPD.
- The NEPA and CEQA processes will be engaged concurrently to allow for effective coordination and collaboration between Southern Empire, the BLM, and the ICPD. All permitting decisions are anticipated to be in place by the end of 2022.

Southern Empire's environmental and permitting efforts are coordinated by Del Fortner Consulting of Tucson, Arizona. Our team includes:

- Stantec Consulting Services Inc., an international firm that will liaise directly with both the BLM and the ICPD to prepare NEPA documentation for the BLM and coordinate the CEQA environmental review process.
- Sespe Consulting, Inc., specialists on SMARA and CEQA baseline environmental analysis and permitting requirements, will assist in document preparation for the CEQA analysis.
- WestLand Resources Inc., specialists in environmental permitting and planning, have completed Oro Cruz Project baseline studies and will provide documentation and services necessary to comply with both the NEPA and CEQA permitting requirements.

Qualified Person (QP)

The scientific and technical information contained in this news release has been prepared, reviewed and approved by David Tupper, P.Geo. (British Columbia), Southern Empire's VP Exploration and a Qualified Person within the context of Canadian Securities Administrators' National Instrument 43-101; Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects (NI 43-101).

About Southern Empire Resources Corp.

Southern Empire is focused on the acquisition, exploration and development of metals and mineral deposits in North America.

In northeastern Durango State, México, Southern Empire has an option to acquire a 100 percent beneficial interest in the 1,750-hectare (4,324-acre) Pedro Gold Project where 2014 drilling by a subsidiary of Newmont Corporation encountered epithermal gold mineralization within basal conglomerates of the Ahuichila formation.

In the Cargo Muchacho mountains of Imperial County, California, Southern Empire owns 100 percent of the historical gold-producing American Girl mine property and holds options to acquire a 100 percent interest in the adjacent 2,160-hectare (5,338-acre) Oro Cruz property located approximately 22.5 kilometres (14 miles) southeast of the operating Mesquite gold mine of Equinox Gold Corp.

At Oro Cruz, extensive historical drilling and large-scale open-pit and underground mining of the American Girl, Padre y Madre, Queen and Cross oxide gold deposits by the American Girl Mining Joint Venture (AGMJV; ultimately owned 53 percent by MK Gold Company and 47 percent by [Hecla Mining Company](#)) occurred between 1987 and 1996. During that time, gold was recovered by either heap leaching of lower-grade, or milling of higher-grade ores until AGMJV operations ceased in late 1996 because of declining gold prices leaving the Oro Cruz property with many gold exploration targets in addition to the historical inferred resource estimate, reported In 2011 by Lincoln Mining Corp., totalling 341,800 ounces gold based on 4,386,000 tonnes averaging 2.2 grams gold per tonne at a cut-off grade of 0.68 g/t Au (4,835,000 tons at 0.07 ounce gold per ton). Please refer to the Cautionary Notice Regarding the Oro Cruz Property Historical Resource Estimate below.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#),
Dale Wallster, CEO and Director

For further information on Southern Empire please visit both www.smp.gold and SEDAR or contact: Lubica Keighery, (778) 889-5476, lubica@smp.gold.

Cautionary Notice on Forward-Looking Information

Information provided in this news release may contain forward-looking statements that are based on assumptions as of the date of this news release. These statements reflect management's current estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations. They are not guarantees of future performance. Southern Empire cautions that all forward-looking statements are inherently uncertain and that actual performance may be affected by a number of material factors, many of which are beyond its respective control. Such factors include, among other things: risks and uncertainties relating to Southern Empire limited operating history, the need to comply with environmental and governmental regulations, results of exploration programs on its projects and those risks and uncertainties identified in its annual and interim financial statements and management discussion and analysis. Accordingly, actual and future events, conditions and results may differ materially from the estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations expressed or implied in the forward-looking information. Except as required under applicable securities legislation, Southern Empire undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise forward-looking information.

Cautionary Notice Regarding Historical Resource Estimate

The historical resource estimate is disclosed in a technical report dated April 29, 2011, prepared for Lincoln Mining Corp. by Tetra Tech, Inc. and filed on SEDAR and is termed inferred mineral resource, which is a category set out in NI 43-101. It was based on historical reverse circulation and core drill hole sample, underground channel sample, and blasthole sample assay results and calculated using ordinary kriging to estimate gold grades in 10-foot-by-10-foot-by-five-foot blocks. Accordingly, Southern Empire considers this historical estimate reliable as well as relevant as it represents key targets for future exploration work. However, a QP has not done sufficient work to verify or classify the historical estimate as a current mineral resource and Southern Empire is not treating this historical estimate as current mineral resources.

Work Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Timing of Southern Empire's exploration programs will be contingent on governmental regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and also the availability of exploration-related personnel, drill contractors, equipment, lodging, et cetera. Southern Empire will adhere to COVID-19 directives regarding safe working practices putting worker, community and national safety first and will proceed with exploration and development work programs only if potential COVID-19 risks can be effectively managed.

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