

Southern Empire Updates Status of Environmental Permitting for the Oro Cruz Project

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VANCOUVER, Nov. 16, 2022 - [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#) (Southern Empire) (TSXV: SMP) (Frankfurt: 5RE) (OTCQB: SMPEF) is pleased to provide an update on the status of the proposed Oro Cruz Project exploration Plan of Operations (the "Plan"), which was submitted to the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") on September 28, 2020, and determined by the BLM to be administratively and technically complete and consistent with U.S. federal regulations one year ago on November 16, 2021. Since then, the Plan has been subject to significant and rigorous environmental and cultural reviews pursuant to the United States National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") and the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA").

These extensive national and state reviews were respectively led by the BLM's El Centro Field Office and the Imperial County Planning Department ("ICPD"). These agencies are now in the process of preparing a joint, draft Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (the "draft EA/MND"), which will provide a complete analysis of the effects on natural, environmental, cultural, and recreational resources that the agencies have determined to be present and potentially affected by the Southern Empire's proposed Oro Cruz Project exploration activities.

Southern Empire anticipates the imminent publication by the BLM of its draft EA/MND, together with an unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact ("FONSI"), which will be followed by an additional 30-day review period during which substantive comments regarding the Plan will be solicited from the public. Also, an informational virtual public meeting is tentatively planned by the BLM for the end of November. Only after subsequent review of the public comments received will the BLM make a final decision regarding authorization of the proposed exploration activities outlined in the Plan.

Additionally, a 582-page Reclamation Plan for compliance with the State of California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act ("SMARA") was submitted on June 24, 2022, to the California Department of Conservation's Division of Mine Reclamation ("DMR") for their review. The Reclamation Plan is now considered to be complete subsequent to DMR's review and comments received on October 28, 2022 and is available to read at: SMP - Oro Cruz Project, Imperial County, California - Reclamation Plan 20220928.

The Imperial County Planning Department will be holding an Environmental Evaluation Committee public hearing on November 17, 2022 for review of the adequacy of the CEQA analysis within the EA/MND. This meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 940 Main Street, El Centro, California.

Following the NEPA and CEQA public review periods, the BLM and Imperial County will coordinate with Southern Empire's third-party NEPA and CEQA contractors to revise the draft EA/MND as deemed necessary and respond to any public comments received in order for the agencies to reach a decision on the Oro Cruz Project, now expected in Q1 2023.

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

- All proposed exploration activities are to be conducted to avoid unnecessary and undue degradation of public lands and resources.
- 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.
- Disturbance of up to only 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).

Summary of the Oro Cruz Exploration Project Permitting Process, to date:

- The Plan was deemed complete by the BLM on September 28, 2020 for Southern Empire's proposed surface exploration activities located within the Picacho ACEC.
- Environmental, biological, cultural, and hydrological baseline studies were completed in preparation for analysis in the permitting processes.
- The BLM 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 draft EA/MND. A 30-day public scoping period began on March 04, 2022 and 5 comments were received from the public.
- A Reclamation Plan for compliance with the State of California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) was prepared and submitted to the DMR on June 24, 2022 and is considered to be complete subsequent to DMR's review and comments received on October 28, 2022.
- The NEPA and CEQA processes are concurrently engaged to allow for effective coordination and collaboration between Southern Empire, the BLM, and the ICPD.
- Imperial County Planning Department will be holding an Environmental Evaluation Committee public hearing on November 17, 2022, for review of the adequacy of the CEQA analysis within the draft EA/MND.
- All permitting decisions are now anticipated to be in place by the end of Q1 2023.

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 liaises directly with both the BLM and the ICPD to prepare NEPA documentation for the BLM and coordinate the CEQA environmental review process with the ICPD.
- Sespe Consulting, Inc., specialists on SMARA and CEQA baseline environmental analysis, permitting and reclamation plan requirements, that assist in document preparation for the CEQA analysis.
- WestLand Resources, Inc., specialists in environmental engineering, permitting and planning, have completed the Oro Cruz Project baseline environmental and cultural studies and have provided 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 minerals deposits in North America.

In northeastern Durango State, México, Southern Empire has an option to acquire a 100-per-cent beneficial interest in the 1,750-hectare Pedro Gold Project. At Pedro, in the spring of 2022, Southern Empire drilled gold mineralization approximately 800 metres from 2014 drilling by a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Corporation. Gold mineralization, associated with highly anomalous arsenic (orpiment and realgar common), antimony, mercury and thallium, has been identified hosted in permeable basal conglomerates deposited during Oligocene extensional deformation, the latter forming widespread Basin and Range physiography along the easter part of Sierra Madre Occidental. Gold is present in 12 of the 17 holes drilled at Pedro to date. Please see Southern Empire's news releases posted on SEDAR for further details.

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") 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 a historical inferred resource estimate, reported in 2011 by Lincoln Mining Corp., totaling 341,800 ounces gold based on 4,386,000 tonnes averaging 2.2 grams gold per tonne (g Au /t) at a cut-off grade of 0.68 g Au/t (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

Cautionary Notice on Forward-Looking Information

Information provided in this news release may contain forward-looking information or forward-looking statements that are based on assumptions as of the date of this news release. Such information or statements reflect management's current estimates, beliefs, intentions, and expectations and 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 many material factors, many of which are beyond its respective control. Such factors include, among other things: risks and uncertainties relating to Southern Empire's 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 Oro Cruz Project 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 Canadian Securities Administrators' System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval ("SEDAR"). It is termed an 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.

Cautionary Notice Regarding Exploration Work Programs

The timing and the ability to conduct Southern Empire's exploration programs are, among other things, contingent on: governmental regulations allowing for the issuance of permits; effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the availability of exploration personnel, drill contractors, equipment, lodging, etc. Southern Empire will adhere to COVID-19 directives regarding safe working practices putting worker and community health and 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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