CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LAHONTAN REGION

BOARD ORDER NO. R6V-2012-0059
WDID 6B159409001

RESCISSION OF WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS
BOARD ORDER NO. 6-95-61
FOR

RAND MINING COMPANY
RAND PROJECT

Kern County

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region (Water Board) finds:

1. Discharger

Rand Mining Company, formerly a subsidiary of Glamis Gold, Inc., and now a subsidiary of Gold Corp USA, Inc., operated a gold and silver mining operation near Randsburg in Kern County (Rand Project). For the purposes of this Water Board Order (Order), Rand Mining Company is referred to as the "Discharger" and Rand Project is referred to as the "Facility."

2. Facility Location

The Facility is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the town of Randsburg in parts of Sections 34 and 35, Township 29 South, Range 40 East, and Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12, Township 30 South, Range 40 East, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian. The Facility overlies portions of the Cuddeback Hydrologic Unit and the Koehn Hydrologic Area of the Freemont Hydrologic Unit.

3. Facility

The Facility operated from 1995 to 2004 as an open-pit mine that utilized cyanide heap leach technology to extract gold and silver. The waste management units consisted of a heap leach pad, two process ponds, and a stormwater collection pond. Other Facility components included waste rock storage areas, an open pit mine, and a process plant. The heap leach pad was constructed with a single 60-mil high-density polyethylene (HDPE) synthetic liner over a 12-inch clay layer with a minimum permeability of $1x10^{-5}$ centimeters per second. The process ponds were constructed with a 60-mil HDPE over compacted subgrade, overlain by a geonet and topped with an 80-mil HDPE liner. The leach pad and process ponds were equipped with a leachate collection and recovery system (LCRS), which was connected to a series of 14 leakage detection sumps (monitoring sumps) around the perimeter of the waste management units.

Leaching of the ore was accomplished primarily by drip-irrigation and supplemented with the use of sprinklers on the top and side-slopes. Process solution draining from the leach pad was collected in the pregnant process pond. After solution recovery of the metals, the solution was returned to the barren process pond where it was recirculated back to the leach pad.

Because depth to groundwater is in excess of 500 feet below ground surface, groundwater monitoring was not a requirement of Board Order No. 6-95-61. In lieu of groundwater monitoring, the Discharger monitored stormwater runoff from the Facility and collected surface water samples from one upgradient location and one downgradient location. Vadose zone monitoring consisted of visual inspection of the monitoring sumps and sample collection of any liquid present.

4. Waste Discharge Requirements

On June 8, 1995, the Water Board adopted Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for the Facility under Board Order No. 6-95-61 to allow for the discharge of heap ore and process solution to the heap leach pad and for the discharge and containment of process solution to two surface impoundments onsite.

5. Reasons for Action

The Discharger ceased operation of the Facility in August 2004. Since that time, the Discharger has implemented a Site Closure Plan, dated October 2004, which was reviewed and accepted by Water Board staff. Detoxification of the heap leach material occurred between August 2004 and January 2006, and the results were documented in the Heap Neutralization Study, dated April 14, 2006. Water Board staff reviewed that report and determined that remaining cyanide levels in the heap material were below the threshold limits established in Board Order No. 6-95-61, and therefore were considered detoxified. In a letter dated July 21, 2006, Water Board staff authorized final reclamation of the heap leach material and removal of the process facilities including clean closure of the process ponds. The Discharger commenced those final closure activities and, on January 26, 2012, submitted a Final Closure Report and Request for Rescission that documents the reclamation activities for the heap material, clean closure of the process ponds, decommissioning of the remaining process facilities, and post-closure monitoring. On April 6, 2012, the Discharger submitted additional information to support site closure activities and the request for rescission. Water Board staff reviewed the Final Closure Report and supplemental information and performed a site inspection of the Facility. Based on that review, Water Board staff has determined that the Discharger has fully implemented the approved Site Closure Plan and, as such, has successfully detoxified the heap leach materials and clean closed the process ponds. In addition, vadose zone and stormwater monitoring data do not indicate any prior releases from the waste management units. Therefore, the Facility no longer presents a threat to water quality, and it not against the public interest to rescind Board Order No. 6-95-61.

6. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

   This action is being taken by the Water Board to rescind WDRs issued pursuant to the California Water Code, and as such, is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15321, subsection (a)(2).

7. Public Notification

   The Water Board has notified the Discharger and interested agencies and persons of its intent to rescind WDRs for the Facility. The Water Board, in a public meeting, heard and considered all comments pertaining to the rescission of these WDRs.

It is hereby ordered that Board Order No. 6-95-61 be rescinded.

I, Patty Z. Kouyoumdjian, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of an Order adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, on November 14, 2012.

Patty Z. Kouyoumdjian

PATTY Z. KOUYOUMDJIAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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