



City of Glenwood Springs
101 West 8th Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Contact:

Debra Figueroa
City Manager
970-384-6401

Hannah Klausman
Public Information Officer/
Assistant to the City Manager
970-384-6407

PRESS RELEASE

May 11, 2020

District Judge Grants City of Glenwood Springs Motion To Intervene In Quarry Lawsuit

The City of Glenwood Springs motion to intervene in Rocky Mountain Industries' (RMI), formerly Rocky Mountain Resources, lawsuit against Garfield County was granted today by District Judge Norrdin.

RMI's lawsuit alleges that Garfield County has no regulatory authority over operations at its Mid-Continent Quarry, located just a half mile from Glenwood Springs city limits, because the federal government also regulates the site.

In the motion to intervene, Glenwood Springs City Attorney Karl Hanlon argued that Garfield County has concurrent regulatory authority over the mine's operations, and that the City of Glenwood Springs has its own regulatory and proprietary interests that are not adequately represented by the County. The Court agreed with the City's position in granting the motion noting "[t]he City's interests are particular to Glenwood Springs, its location relative to the quarry, its open spaces, and road maintenance, police, and emergency services it provides in the area at its own expense."

"The Court granting the motion to intervene is a crucial first step" said Hanlon "but we have a long road ahead of us to protect the City and its citizens."

"This is good news. The City continues to gain small victories in this fight against RMI. This proposed quarry expansion is right on our doorstep and we are, and will continue to be, vigilant in our fight for the vibrancy of Glenwood Springs," said City of Glenwood Spring Mayor Jonathan Godes.

The Mid-Continent Quarry is an open pit mine located on federal lands a mile north of downtown Glenwood Springs, directly adjacent to Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park. RMI has applied to expand the existing mine site from 15.7 acres to 447 acres. The expanded quarry would be almost 30 times larger than the existing one. RMI's application anticipates up to 500 truck trips per day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. That equates to a truck leaving the mine every 96 seconds for the rail yard next to the Colorado River.

The expanded mine would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Blasting would be allowed from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the impacts of the mine application and guide its decision-making on the proposed expansion. RMI's application has led to broad community action in opposition, including the formation of a non-profit group, The Glenwood Springs Citizens Alliance. Hundreds of local businesses and thousands of residents have signed petitions in opposition.

RMI filed suit in both state and federal court challenging Garfield County's regulatory authority after the County Development Department issued RMI a notice of violation of the County's special use permit for a number of actions with its operations at the quarry. The County's special use permit governs operations that directly affect the County and the City. In its investigation, the Garfield County Development Department found:

- RMI exceeded the approved acreage permitted for mining operations;
- RMI is extracting for-sale materials beyond original approvals, including operating a rock and gravel;
- RMI had been operating within the December 15 to April 15 time frame when they are supposed to be closed to protect wildlife activities;
- RMI is out of compliance with the Road Maintenance Agreement with Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park by using larger (18-wheeler) trucks than what was being represented, with trucks speeding, taking up both lanes of traffic, and causing potential traffic hazards.

The federal lawsuit is on hold while RMI's suit is adjudicated in state court.

In November, 2019, the City of Glenwood Springs unveiled a public awareness campaign, Don't Strip Glenwood, designed to operate in tandem with other community activism groups. The campaign underscores the City Council's recently adopted resolution in opposition to the proposed mine expansion. The Nov. 8 resolution details the impacts of the expansion plan, including a 5,000 percent increase in the mine's size, permanent damage to the city's thriving tourist economy, markedly increased truck traffic, visual impacts, and degradation of air and water quality in the region.

Glenwood Springs has so far garnered nearly unanimous support from neighboring communities in the fight against mine expansion. In addition to the Glenwood City Council, elected boards in surrounding jurisdictions have passed resolutions against the mine expansion, including Silt, Rifle, New Castle, Eagle, Carbondale, Basalt, Snowmass Village, Aspen, Eagle County, and Pitkin County.

Glenwood Springs is best known as a historic destination, receiving 1.2 million visitors per year who visit for its world-famous natural hot springs pools, outdoor recreation activities that include hiking, biking, skiing, golf, caving, as well as water-based activities accessible on the iconic Colorado River. The Glenwood Springs economy has been based on tourism since 1885, the year of its incorporation. It has been recognized as the 2011 "Most Fun Town in America" by Rand McNally and USA Today, the 2014 #6 "Best Small Towns" by Livability, and the 2015 "The 5th Best Place to Live in America" by Outside Magazine.

###

www.cogs.us