



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

Simon Stepp
VP of Engineering, Vista Energy Resources
Coalspur Mines (Operations) Ltd.

sstepp@clinegrp.com

Dear Simon Stepp:

Pursuant to section 17 of the *Impact Assessment Act*, I am writing to advise Coalspur Mines (Operations) Ltd. that I am of the opinion that it is clear that the Phase I Vista Test Underground Mine and Vista Mine Phase II Expansion Projects (the Projects) would cause unacceptable environmental effects within federal jurisdiction.

I have formed this opinion based on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's review of Coalspur Mines (Operations) Ltd. Initial Project Description, comments received in relation to the Projects, and the Government of Canada's policy statement on future thermal coal mining projects and project expansions in Canada.

Canada has put measures in place to transition away from unabated coal-fired electricity generation in Canada, and has now announced its role in international leadership to advance global decarbonisation and to encourage the elimination of coal-fired electricity globally. This is consistent with Canada's role as Co-Chair of the Powering Past Coal Alliance.

The Projects will produce thermal coal, which will hinder this international commitment in respect of climate change and would not make any net positive contribution to sustainability. The Projects may also hinder Canada's international commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Based on the available information, significant uncertainty also remains as to whether an offsetting plan could adequately balance the Projects' impacts without jeopardizing the survival and recovery of fish species at risk.

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50^e anniversaire d'Environnement et Changement climatique Canada
Environment and Climate Change Canada's 50th anniversary

150^e anniversaire du Service météorologique du Canada
Meteorological Service of Canada's 150th anniversary

Canada



These factors weigh against the public interest to the extent that it is clear to me that the effects within federal jurisdiction likely to be caused by the Projects cannot be in the public interest.

My opinion on the Projects under section 17 do not prevent them from being assessed under the *Impact Assessment Act* and, should the Projects proceed through the assessment process, they will be assessed on their own merits. However, the Government of Canada must ultimately determine that the effects of the Projects are in the public interest in order to allow the Projects to proceed.

Should the Projects proceed through the assessment process, the Government of Canada will continue to consider all relevant information about the extent to which the Projects contribute to sustainability, and the extent to which the effects of the Projects hinder or contribute to the Government of Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and its commitments in respect of climate change.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.