

[Address block]

Re: Information Request

Dear [Addressee]:

This letter responds to your recent inquiries to various Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices in multiple locations regarding the desire of your company, Gold Rush Expeditions, Inc., to conduct “an organized event” of “public outings” to visit abandoned mines with members of the public and to purport to teach mine safety to members of the public. In your email you requested the BLM’s help in making such efforts “a reality.”

Based upon advertising and representations made at the website of Gold Rush Expeditions, we understand that Gold Rush Expeditions, Inc. purports to establish and sell mine claims to the public at abandoned mines. Many of those mines may be located on public lands.

The BLM strongly disapproves of the efforts of your company to market such claims with respect to abandoned mines to the general public or to otherwise encourage the public to enter abandoned mines. Abandoned mines are inherently unsafe. They pose severe risks of injury or death to the public. The risks of such visitation are well-documented at the BLM’s public website:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Abandoned_Mine_Lands/Safety_Education/types_of_safety_hazards.html

The policy of the BLM has been, and continues to be, to discourage the public from entering, visiting, or exploring abandoned mines. Encouraging people to believe that abandoned mines are safe for entry for profit or recreation is contrary to public safety and to BLM policy. Bringing people to abandoned mines for entry exposes them to severe risk of injury or death. Accordingly, we urge you and your company to cease such efforts. The BLM will not encourage, support, or participate in any of the activities that you propose to conduct.

Additionally, we have noted that your company is using the name “National Bureau of Mines” on some of its vehicles and in various references on one of its websites. While the so-called National Bureau of Mines represents itself as a separate entity from Gold Rush Expeditions, Inc., the contact/ mailing address on the relevant website is identical to that of Gold Rush Expeditions, Inc.

The BLM considers your company’s use of the name “National Bureau of Mines” to be absolutely misleading to the public. As you no doubt are aware, the Bureau of Mines was a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior that was closed by Congress in 1996. Your

company does not have Federal Government permission to use the name of this former Federal agency. Notwithstanding your small print disclaimers to the contrary, your continued use of this name on company vehicles or on your websites implies Federal Government participation or approval of Gold Rush Expeditions' activities of claim selling or abandoned mine exploration activities. Accordingly, we demand that you cease the use of the words "Bureau of Mines."

Additionally, under the guise of creating a database for the "certification" of mines, "to fill the gap left behind" by the Bureau of Mines, the so-called National Bureau of Mines asks the public to provide information about an abandoned mine's "interior condition." Thus, you are encouraging the public to enter abandoned mines to determine their interior condition. It is apparent that the intent of the establishment of this purported mine certification database is to create a list of abandoned mines for claim selling or exploration. All of these activities are contrary to BLM policy and, ultimately, will impair public safety.

Finally, we would remind you that the BLM has acted to close many dangerous abandoned mines with bat gates and other closure equipment. Such equipment is Federal Government property. Additionally, there may be exterior structures that have been left behind on the surface of abandoned mines on public lands. Any attempts to remove or damage such property would constitute the theft or destruction of Federal Government property, subjecting the perpetrators to potential criminal prosecution and, if such persons were convicted, to criminal penalties.

If you have additional questions regarding the letter, please feel free to contact Stephanie Odell, Abandoned Mine Lands Program Lead, at (202) 912-7133.

Sincerely,

[State Director]

cc: [As appropriate]