

ioneer

Tiehm's Buckwheat Regulatory Workshop

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President

**Providing the
materials for a
sustainable &
thriving planet.**

SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR NEVADA

- Loneer's presence and commitment to BLM regulation ensures the buckwheat receives constant monitoring and protection from external threats such as wildfires, grazing and recreationists
- If the Project does not move forward, those external perils will still exist; however, the company's continued research, monitoring, and voluntary protection activities will cease and add uncertainty to Tiehm's buckwheat existence

PROTECTING TIEHM'S BUCKWHEAT, OR STOPPING DEVELOPMENT?

- Clearly, the lack of interest shown by many of the July 21 commenters in the field research, genetic research, and protection plan already being conducted by Loneer and its expert advisors illustrates that their interest is not focused on Tiehm's buckwheat, but on stopping development
- Further, statements like the one below speak to wanting to stop development, rather than increase the chances of Tiehm's buckwheat survival

So **we are**, and we can talk about this in a bit, you know, **engaging on numerous different administrative fronts to try to stop this mine.**

June 30, 2020 Resistance Radio Podcast, Patrick Donnelly

- Loneer and its partners are the only parties that have conducted meaningful research on the plant and our findings to date suggest the plant shows no preference for mineralized soils but only one for disturbed areas - the Tiehm's buckwheat has a preference for carbonate clays, which is common for mat buckwheats
- Loneer's ongoing research should provide more in-depth understanding of the plant's preferences regarding soil types, exposure, etc.

ECONOMIC IMPACT TO SMALL BUSINESSES

- Loneer believes that the NDF Small Business Impact Study published on July 14 is inadequate and does not meet the NRS 233B.0608 requirement of determining if regulation will impose a direct and significant economic burden upon a small business
- Additional regulation will cause incalculable delay and present uncertainty for small businesses that would benefit from the Project being built
 - **Delays cost money** for businesses, especially those of indeterminate length as small businesses cannot plan and invest for future growth
 - **Uncertainty** leads to **higher costs** of investment capital, which may make expansion uneconomic
 - **Business closures** and/or new businesses **deciding not to launch**
- Thirty-one surveys were received from small businesses and the impact of regulation seems to be given no consideration based on the NDF conclusion

ECONOMIC IMPACT TO SMALL BUSINESSES

- Nevada, especially rural Nevada, needs **job creation**
 - The unemployment rate in Nevada was 15% in June, **35% higher** than the national unemployment rate
 - Applied Analysis estimates that the Rhyolite Ride project will **200-284 long-term jobs** with average total compensation of **\$115,000/yr. - \$141,000/yr.** in its low vs. median case
- Ioneer economic activity creates a multiplier for the state of Nevada
 - Applied Analysis estimates that every \$1.00 of annual economic activity generated by Ioneer supports \$1.57 of activity in Nevada
- The local community needs these benefits as soon as possible to fund:
 - **Healthcare** services
 - New, and improved **schools**
 - Essential services like **tire repair** shops
 - **Housing**

WHY THE RHYOLITE RIDGE PROJECT IS UNIQUE

- Rhyolite Ridge is **the first** US lithium project to complete a definitive feasibility study since the 1960's
- **Unique mineralogy** allows for efficient processing and production in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Lithium is abundant across the earth, but in most cases is **difficult to process** in an **environmentally sustainable** and **economic** manner
- During the July 21 workshop, it was mentioned that lithium could be obtained from the sea
- Using commercial processing methods, it would require **an area 20% larger than Death Valley** to be flooded as an evaporation "pond"

DELAYS IMPACT NEVADA'S SECURITY

- **Currently**, lithium compounds used in batteries (including those in cars made in Nevada) **come from either China or South America**
- Foreign sources of lithium present **security risk** that is 1) environmental 2) social and 3) economic
 - **Non-US environmental protections** are often less codified, or **less enforced**
 - The **fossil fuels** used to transport non-US lithium compounds have a **strong, negative environmental impact** to all species, including Tiehm's buckwheat
 - The **United States, and Nevada, risk losing the job creation** and other economic benefits of the Electric Vehicle supply chain if domestic resources cannot be developed

THE PROJECT AND TIEHM'S BUCKWHEAT CAN COEXIST

- Current safeguards are already sufficient when coupled with the protection and management plans to be enforced as part of the Mine Plan of Operations
- Rhyolite Ridge can be a significant source of lithium and boron in coexistence with Tiehm's buckwheat and this is supported by scientific studies
- The Project will create hundreds of good-paying jobs in an economically challenged, rural community
- Construction jobs in 2021 to help Nevada emerge from the current recession
- Additional regulation will have an economic impact on many small businesses in rural Nevada
- Loneer is dedicated to the protection of Tiehm's buckwheat as demonstrated by our actions to date and the commitments that will form part of the conditions of approval

APPENDIX: LISTING TIEHM'S BUCKWHEAT IS UNNECESSARY

- Tiehm's buckwheat is not threatened with extinction nor is its existence endangered.
- There are no surface disturbing exploration activities in progress by Loneer at Rhyolite Ridge and all past work has been planned and conducted to avoid all Tiehm's buckwheat plants.
- Loneer's Plan of Operation in support of the proposed mining operation is being reviewed by BLM and when approved, will be subject to the federal NEPA process. No mining or exploration activities can be undertaken until the Plan is approved.
- Tiehm's buckwheat is classified as a BLM Sensitive Species and this must be taken into account when assessing the proposed Plan of Operation.
- The Plan includes a comprehensive Tiehm's buckwheat protection plan that has been developed over a two-year period by a group of highly experienced and respected Nevada botanists and researchers. The plan is based on solid scientific research and proven techniques for protecting and propagating buckwheat.
- Loneer has voluntarily conducted extensive research work to better understand the plant and this work is instrumental in ensuring the survival and uplift of the plant in its natural habitat. Loneer will continue to undertake this work.
- Loneer is committed to undertaking and funding the appropriate protection measures, research and strategies to ensure the plant's existence is not endangered.
- As a result, Tiehm's buckwheat does not need assistance from the State to ensure its survival and therefore a listing is not necessary.

APPENDIX: RHYOLITE RIDGE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

