

**Draft
Environmental Impact Statement
HB In-Situ Solution Mine Project**

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carlsbad Field Office

Cooperating Agencies: City of Carlsbad, New Mexico
City of Eunice, New Mexico
City of Hobbs, New Mexico
Chaves County, New Mexico
Lea County, New Mexico
U.S. Department of Energy
Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of
Cultural Affairs
Mining and Minerals Division, New Mexico Energy, Minerals
and Natural Resources Department

Project Location: Eddy County, New Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Intrepid Potash, Inc. (Intrepid) is proposing to extract the potash remaining in inactive underground mine workings by constructing and operating an in-situ solution mine project, located approximately 20 miles northeast of Carlsbad in Eddy County, New Mexico. Instead of excavating the remaining potash in the remaining underground pillars and walls of the inactive workings, the process would inject saline water into the inactive mine workings and extract a mineral-rich solution. This mineral-rich solution would be pumped to the surface and transported to evaporation ponds. Once the solution evaporates in the ponds, the potassium-bearing salts would be harvested from the ponds and transported to a newly constructed mill for ore refinement.

The Proposed Action would require approximately 980 acres of new surface disturbance, the installation of 82 miles of surface pipelines within almost 38 miles of new rights-of-way, construction and operation of up to 7 groundwater pumping wells and 14 monitoring wells, construction of an evaporation pond system and a new processing mill, and pumping of a maximum of 2,267 gallons per minute of groundwater from combined sources. The proposed project would operate for 28 years.

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement analyzes the environmental effects of the Proposed Action, two action alternatives, and the No Action Alternative.

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