

Environmental Protection Act 1986

Section 43A

**NOTICE OF DECISION TO CONSENT TO CHANGE TO PROPOSAL DURING
ASSESSMENT**

PERSON TO WHOM THIS NOTICE IS GIVEN

- (a) Venturex Resources Limited (ACN: 122 180 205)
Level 2, 91 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

PROPOSAL TO WHICH THIS NOTICE RELATES:

Sulphur Springs Zinc – Copper Project
Assessment No. 2120

Pursuant to section 43A of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) consents to the proponent making the following changes to the proposal during assessment without a revised proposal being referred:

- incorporation of water management infrastructure and sediment control ponds adjacent to the haul road into the proposal; and
- an increase in the disturbance footprint from 321.9 hectares (ha) to 326.7 ha.

See Figure 1 attached.

EFFECT OF THIS NOTICE:

1. The proponent may change the proposal as provided for in this notice.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL:

There are no rights of appeal under the EP Act in respect of this decision.



Robert Harvey
Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

5 July 2018

Environmental Protection Act 1986

Section 43A

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CONSENT TO CHANGE PROPOSAL DURING ASSESSMENT

Proposal: Sulphur Springs Copper – Zinc Project

Proponent: Venturex Resources Limited

Decision

For the reasons outlined below, the EPA has determined to consent to the Proponent changing the Proposal outlined in Schedule 1 attached to this Statement of Reasons.

Background

On 14 December 2016, Venturex Resources Limited referred the Proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under section 38 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Proposal included the development and operation of a zinc - copper mine and processing plant in the Sulphur Springs area, located 57 km west of Marble Bar and 144 km south-east of Port Hedland. The EPA determined to assess the Proposal at the level of Environmental Review – no public review on 17 July 2017.

In advance of the EPA preparing a report on the outcome of its assessment of the Proposal, the Proponent has sought the EPA's consent to the Proponent changing the Proposal. Notification of a change to the Proposal under section 43A was received on 12 June 2018.

The change pertains to an increase to the disturbance footprint of 4.8 hectares to accommodate water management and sediment control infrastructure. No change to the overall Development Envelope is proposed.

Relevant Statutory and Administrative Provisions

Section 3.8 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Part IV Divisions 1 and 2) Procedures Manual 2016 guides what information the EPA requires from a person wanting to change its proposal during assessment. In considering the request for consent, the EPA considered the:

- details of the proposed change;
- statement of the significance of the change; and
- rationale for the change.

Materials considered in making this decision

In determining whether to consent to the Proponent changing the Proposal the EPA has considered the following:

1. Proponent information provided within the notification of a change to the Proposal under S43A.
2. Further information provided by the Proponent on 28 June 2018.
3. Figure 1 depicting the change in the disturbance footprint provided by the Proponent on 29 June 2018.

Consideration

1. Nature of the proposed change

The proposed changes to the Proposal include:

- Construction of water management infrastructure and sediment control ponds to assist with the management of surface water quality. The additional infrastructure is expected to minimise sediment loads in stormwater diverted around the project area into the Sulphur Springs Creek.
- Water management infrastructure and ponds are to be located adjacent to the proposed haul road downstream of the mine area.

The change to the Proposal will result in an increase to the disturbance footprint of 4.8 hectares (ha). Table 1 provides details on the change to the disturbance footprint within the Development Envelope.

Table 1: Change to disturbance within the proposed Development Envelope

| Proposal | Development Envelope (ha) | Disturbance (ha) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Referred | 848.3 | 321.9 |
| Changed | 848.3 | 326.7 |
| Increase | 0 | 4.8 |

The changes to the Proposal are for the same elements (i.e. pit, mine infrastructure etc.) and activities (i.e. mining and related infrastructure) as what was provided in the referral documentation with the inclusion of water management infrastructure and sediment control ponds. Table 2 outlines the new infrastructure and associated disturbance of an additional 4.8 ha (text in bold).

Table 2: Change to Proposal elements and proposed extent

| Element | Proposed Extent |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Mine and associated infrastructure | Clearing of no more than 326.7 ha within the 848.3 ha Development Envelope. |
| Tailings storage facility | A 58.9 ha conventional 'valley fill' tailings storage facility (TSF) for disposal of no more than 8.8 million tonnes (Mt) over the project life. |
| Heap leach facility | A lined heap leach facility will occupy the same footprint as the TSF with deposition of no more than 1.07 Mt over the project life. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Waste rock dumps | One 79.6 ha permanent waste rock dump (WRD) for disposal of no more than 41 Mt over the project life. One 4.1 ha temporary WRD for disposal of no more than 1.2 Mt of non-acid forming waste rock. |
| Processing plant | A processing plant (up to 1.5 Mtpa) and associated facilities covering an area of 60.4 ha. |
| Dewatering and mine area water supply | Mine dewatering of up to 0.64 gigalitres/year (GL/yr), all to be used on site. |
| Water supply | Water abstraction of up to 0.32 GL/yr. |
| Open pit and supporting infrastructure | Includes open pit, accommodation camp, borrow pits, topsoil stockpiles, abandonment bund, sediment ponds, water management infrastructure , access roads, haul roads, communications, pipelines and powerlines covering an area of 123.7 ha (increase of 4.8 ha) . |

The Proponent has outlined that the change is beneficial in that the infrastructure will aid in the management of water quality and reduce sediment loads within surface water diverted around the project to the Sulphur Springs Creek. The changed disturbance to vegetation communities is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Vegetation communities impacted by proposed change

| Code | Description | Total Mapped (ha) ¹ | Proposed Clearing Area (ha) referred | Changed clearing area | Change in disturbance footprint (ha) |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Open forest to open woodland: other | | | | | |
| 2a | <i>Eucalyptus victrix</i> scattered trees to open woodland which may include <i>Melaleuca glomerata</i> and <i>Melaleuca linophylla</i> over open to closed scrub in creek beds and low slopes. | 177.7 | 6.4 | 8.4 | 2.0 |
| 5a | <i>Eucalyptus leucophloia</i> scattered low trees over patches of <i>Acacia</i> shrubs over hummock grasslands of <i>Triodia</i> species, including <i>T. brizoides</i> , <i>T. wiseana</i> and <i>T. epactia</i> on ridge slopes. | 2253.4 | 111.1 | 111.3 | 0.2 |
| 6a | <i>Corymbia hamersleyana</i> scattered low trees to low open woodland over tall shrubs to open shrubland of <i>Acacia</i> spp. and <i>Grevillea wickhamii</i> over hummock | 7285.8 | 122.6 | 124.9 | 2.3 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------|------|------|-------------------|
| | grasslands on creek banks, flood banks and distributing fans. | | | | |
| 11a | Shrubland to closed scrubland of <i>Acacia</i> species, including <i>A. acradenia</i> , <i>A. pyrifolia</i> and <i>A. tumida</i> along small creeklines and on the adjacent parts of valley floors and distributing fans. | 818.4 | 22.2 | 22.4 | 0.2 |
| Total change | | | | | 4.8 (1.5%) |

The fauna habitats that will primarily be impacted are scree slopes; and rocky ridges and gorge habitat. The rocky ridges and gorge habitat is considered potential Northern Quoll habitat. Table 4 provides details on the fauna habitat that will be impacted by the changed disturbance footprint.

Table 4: Fauna habitat impacted by the proposed change

| Habitat | Regional context | Total Mapped Area (ha) ¹ | Proposed clearing area in referral (ha) | Changed clearing area (ha) | Change in disturbance footprint (ha) |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rocky foothills | Widespread throughout the surrounding landscape. Well represented in the region. | 2487.3 | 149.3 | 149.4 | 0.1 |
| Scree slopes | Widespread throughout the surrounding landscape. Well represented in the region. | 1042.0 | 96.8 | 101.4 | 4.6 |
| Rocky ridges and gorges | Limited in the surrounding landscape but well connected. Well represented in the region. | 210.7 | 26.9 | 27.1 | 0.2 |
| Total | | | | | 4.9² |

Note 1: The 0.1 ha difference between total vegetation communities and total fauna habitat disturbance is due to rounding.

In consideration of all of the information above, the changes to the Proposal are not considered to be significant.

2. Stage of the assessment process

A draft Environmental Review Document (ERD) was submitted to the EPA for review on 7 June 2018. The additional increased disturbance footprint has been included in the ERD.

3. Currency, relevance and reliability of the information, including submissions

The Development Envelope, and study area in which the environmental investigations have been undertaken are the same as what was in the referral. All of the environmental studies for the Proposal have been included in the ERD.

4. Community engagement

The Environmental Review process will include referral to relevant decision-making authorities.

5. Level of public concern

One comment was received during the 7-day comment period on the referral requesting the level of assessment to be set at Public Environmental Review. The Proposal is being assessed at Environmental Review - no public review period.

Consideration of Whether the Change is Unlikely to Significantly Increase Any Impact that the Proposal May Have on the Environment

The following were considered:

a) Values, sensitivity and the quality of the environment which is likely to be impacted

The change to the Proposal does not include new factors or different impacts to the environment, than the Proposal that was referred.

b) Extent (intensity, duration, magnitude and geographic footprint) of the likely impacts

The change to the Proposal does not include an increase to the Development Envelope or an increase in duration. The increase in disturbance of 4.8 ha represents an increase of 1.5%.

c) Consequence of the likely impacts (or change)

The change to the Proposal does not alter the types of impacts associated with the Proposal (mining).

d) Resilience of the environment to cope with the impacts or change

The type of impacts associated with the change to the Proposal are the same as the Proposal referred, and the increase in impacts is comparatively minor.

e) Cumulative impacts with other projects

The additional infrastructure will be assessed with the other project elements outlined in the ERD.

f) Connections and interactions between parts of the environment to inform holistic view of impacts of the whole environment

The additional infrastructure does not alter any connections or interactions with the receiving environment.

g) Level of confidence in the prediction of impacts and the success of proposed mitigation

The Development Envelope, and the Proponent's study area in which environmental investigations have been undertaken remains unchanged when compared to the referral. The Proponent has undertaken investigations to inform the assessment and the level of confidence in the predicted impacts, and the success of the proposed mitigation measures remain unchanged.

h) Public interest about the likely effect of the Proposal, if implemented, on the environment, and public information that informs the EPA's assessment

There was a low to medium level of public interest in the Proposal, and the level of assessment set by the EPA (i.e. Environmental review – no public review) was lower than that requested by the single commenter on the referral.

Schedule 1

Change to Proposal

| Element | Current proposal | Changed proposal |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Mine and associated infrastructure | 321.9 ha within the 848.3 hectare (ha) Development Envelope | 326.7 ha disturbance within the 848.3 ha Development Envelope |

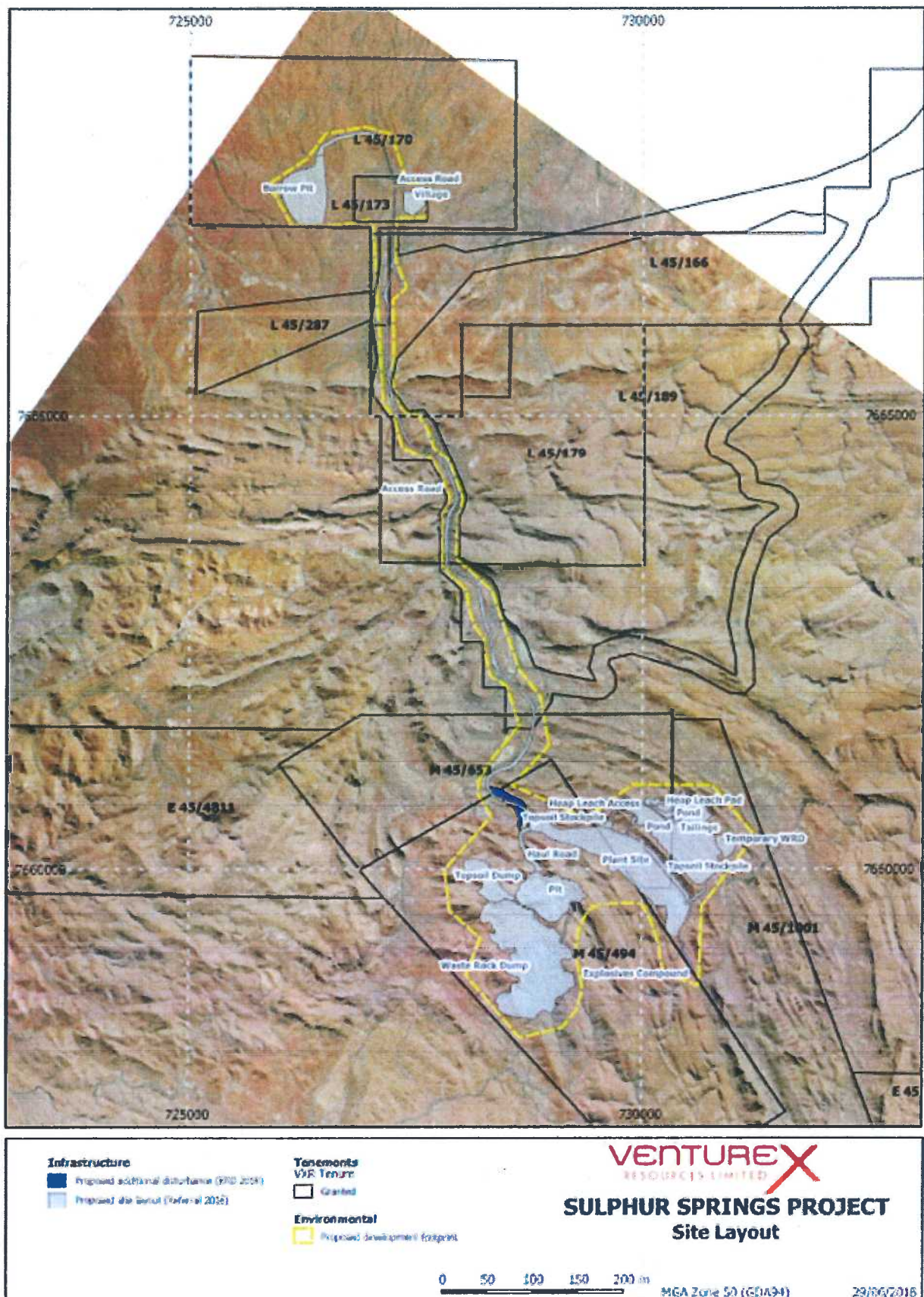


Figure 1 - Change to Proposal

