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The Honourable Steven Guibeault MP
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
200 Sacre'-Coeur Boulevard
Gateneau, QC K1A 0H3

September 27, 2024

Re: Vista Coal Mine Phase II Expansion Project

Dear Minister Guibeault,

We would like to take this opportunity to recommend Coalspur as an outstanding partner to Westshore Terminals. Since 2020, Coalspur has been a vital contributor to our business, representing 20% of our overall operations. Westshore employs approximately 350 local residents, providing high-quality jobs and supporting the local economy which depend on the Vista Coal Mine. Our partnership has been highly successful, and Coalspur's commitment to operational excellence and community engagement has made them a valuable asset to Westshore and the region.

We are writing as a business partner of Vista Coal Mine to express our support for the Phase II Expansion Project. The Vista Mine operates in a community with a rich history rooted in natural resource extraction, including over a century of coal mining. Industries like these are vital for sustaining communities in rural Canada, and Vista Coal directly employs 460 people in well-paying jobs, in addition to supporting numerous contractors and suppliers, many of whom reside in Hinton.

In 2020, when the Teck Coal Cheviot Mine closed, Vista played a critical role in absorbing much of the displaced workforce, continuing the community support that the coal industry has provided since the early 1900s. However, despite the benefits, the Phase II Expansion has faced significant delays. The project has been twice designated under the Impact Assessment Act, and both times the federal courts have set aside this designation. We understand that a new request for designation has been submitted by the Keepers of the Athabasca and the West Athabasca Bioregional Society.

While we respect the participation of these organizations in the regulatory process, we ask that you honor the court's prior rulings and refrain from considering further designation of this project, which would only create additional uncertainty and delays.

We recognize that your mandate is largely environmental, but we have seen this region thrive through a balance of economic activity—such as coal mining, forestry, and oil and gas—while co-existing with environmental stewardship.

From a regulatory standpoint, we would like to highlight the following points made by Vista Coal:

Phase II is an extension, not a new project: As production from the existing Phase I area winds down, Phase II will ramp up, maintaining current production levels.

No increase in production: The average annual coal production at the Vista Mine will not increase with Phase II approval.

Progressive reclamation: Mined areas are progressively reclaimed, and the overall disturbance footprint will remain consistent as Phase II is mined.

We appreciate your consideration of these perspectives and hope that you will carefully evaluate the benefits of this project in your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Glenn Dudar
Vice-President and General Manager
Westshore Terminals