UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Cynthia Lummis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lummis:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

One of our foremost priorities during the response has been to collect and publicly release information to help ensure the health and safety of affected communities. Per the preparedness, planning, and response process jointly developed with the state of Colorado, notification is a mutual responsibility of EPA and the state. On August 5, 2015, the day of the release, within two hours, notification of downstream jurisdictions within Colorado occurred before the plume reached drinking water intakes and irrigation diversions. All downstream jurisdictions were notified in advance of the plume's arrival. The EPA's Gold King Mine website, http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine, contains comprehensive information that is responsive to many of the inquiries posed in your letter. Specifically, chronologies of the event have been posted, including a timeline of notifications, as well as photos and videos related to the incident.

The EPA collected and posted on the website water quality samples throughout the water system from multiple locations in Colorado and New Mexico to the Navajo Nation at daily intervals beginning on August 6, 2015. Sediment sampling began on August 11, 2015. Surface water samples taken prior to the plume's arrival were used to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Surface water samples were collected on August 6, 2015, at two locations prior to arrival of the plume along the Animas and San Juan Rivers in New Mexico. As of September 8, 2015, the EPA has collected 730 surface water samples and 488 sediment samples. Sampling data taken since the event indicates that metals and other constituents in water resources and sediment are returning to pre-event conditions.

Because the EPA and the state of Colorado have been working to assess impacts to water quality in the Animas River for several years, we have good information and data on background conditions in the river. On September 17, 2015, the agency requested comment on a draft long-

term monitoring plan for surface water, sediments and biology. The EPA will use this information to assess long-term needs and evaluate our progress in restoring the waters impacted by the Gold King Mine release.

Regarding funding allocations, as of September 28, 2015, the EPA has expended approximately $13.2M from the EPA Superfund Program, which is the statutory authority under which the EPA was operating in the Upper Animas Watershed. The Superfund Program includes two main programs – Removal and Remedial. Within the Remedial Program, remedial funds may be used for, among other things, pipeline activities, those that investigate the site for possible listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Remedial Program was using those resources to assess and investigate this site – all of this is possible prior to listing on the NPL. However, the program cannot use funds to conduct remedial action (the long-term remediation work) without the site being listed. The Removal Program also receives Superfund resources, via a different program project, to conduct removal related activities (generally, emergency response and other shorter-term response actions). Even on listed sites, it is possible to have removal actions taking place concurrent with the remedial process, as the removal program can step in to stop the releases while a more long-term remediation strategy is put in place.

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One of the initial lessons learned in the aftermath of the Gold King Mine release is that the EPA can improve its communications regarding releases and other environmental events that may affect multiple jurisdictions. To support response related notifications and communications between the EPA and our state, tribal and local partners, on September 4, 2015, I issued guidance to Regional Response Teams to strengthen their Regional Contingency Plans, particularly regarding the need to alert and coordinate with responders in downstream alerts. Timely state and federal notification is critical to allow impacted communities to prepare for potential environmental emergencies. Additionally, we have updated our website to include a new notification plan for Gold King Mine stakeholders throughout the watershed regarding potential impacts of any mining related activities.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-1859 or levine.carolyn@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF
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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Steve Pearce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pearce:

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Assistant Administrator

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The Honorable Thomas Emmer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Emmer:

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Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Thomas Massie
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Massie:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

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Sincerely,

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Thomas Rooney
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rooney:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Vern Buchanan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Buchanan:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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The Honorable Lynn Westmoreland
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Westmoreland:

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

OCT 20 2015

The Honorable Bill Flores
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Flores:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

One of our foremost priorities during the response has been to collect and publicly release information to help ensure the health and safety of affected communities. Per the preparedness, planning, and response process jointly developed with the state of Colorado, notification is a mutual responsibility of EPA and the state. On August 5, 2015, the day of the release, within two hours, notification of downstream jurisdictions within Colorado occurred before the plume reached drinking water intakes and irrigation diversions. All downstream jurisdictions were notified in advance of the plume's arrival. The EPA's Gold King Mine website, http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine, contains comprehensive information that is responsive to many of the inquiries posed in your letter. Specifically, chronologies of the event have been posted, including a timeline of notifications, as well as photos and videos related to the incident.

The EPA collected and posted on the website water quality samples throughout the water system from multiple locations in Colorado and New Mexico to the Navajo Nation at daily intervals beginning on August 6, 2015. Sediment sampling began on August 11, 2015. Surface water samples taken prior to the plume's arrival were used to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Surface water samples were collected on August 6, 2015, at two locations prior to arrival of the plume along the Animas and San Juan Rivers in New Mexico. As of September 8, 2015, the EPA has collected 730 surface water samples and 488 sediment samples. Sampling data taken since the event indicates that metals and other constituents in water resources and sediment are returning to pre-event conditions.

Because the EPA and the state of Colorado have been working to assess impacts to water quality in the Animas River for several years, we have good information and data on background conditions in the river. On September 17, 2015, the agency requested comment on a draft long-

term monitoring plan for surface water, sediments and biology. The EPA will use this information to assess long-term needs and evaluate our progress in restoring the waters impacted by the Gold King Mine release.

Regarding funding allocations, as of September 28, 2015, the EPA has expended approximately $13.2M from the EPA Superfund Program, which is the statutory authority under which the EPA was operating in the Upper Animas Watershed. The Superfund Program includes two main programs – Removal and Remedial. Within the Remedial Program, remedial funds may be used for, among other things, pipeline activities, those that investigate the site for possible listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Remedial Program was using those resources to assess and investigate this site – all of this is possible prior to listing on the NPL. However, the program cannot use funds to conduct remedial action (the long-term remediation work) without the site being listed. The Removal Program also receives Superfund resources, via a different program project, to conduct removal related activities (generally, emergency response and other shorter-term response actions). Even on listed sites, it is possible to have removal actions taking place concurrent with the remedial process, as the removal program can step in to stop the releases while a more long-term remediation strategy is put in place.

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One of the initial lessons learned in the aftermath of the Gold King Mine release is that the EPA can improve its communications regarding releases and other environmental events that may affect multiple jurisdictions. To support response related notifications and communications between the EPA and our state, tribal and local partners, on September 4, 2015, I issued guidance to Regional Response Teams to strengthen their Regional Contingency Plans, particularly regarding the need to alert and coordinate with responders in downstream alerts. Timely state and federal notification is critical to allow impacted communities to prepare for potential environmental emergencies. Additionally, we have updated our website to include a new notification plan for Gold King Mine stakeholders throughout the watershed regarding potential impacts of any mining related activities.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-1859 or levine.carolyn@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Chris Stewart
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Stewart:

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Mathy Stanislaus

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Assistant Administrator

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The Honorable Cresent Hardy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hardy:

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Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Dan Newhouse
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Newhouse:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Dave Brat
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Brat:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
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The Honorable David Rouzer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rouzer:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OFFICE OF
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The Honorable Doug Lamborn
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lamborn:

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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable French Hill
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hill:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

One of our foremost priorities during the response has been to collect and publicly release information to help ensure the health and safety of affected communities. Per the preparedness, planning, and response process jointly developed with the state of Colorado, notification is a mutual responsibility of EPA and the state. On August 5, 2015, the day of the release, within two hours, notification of downstream jurisdictions within Colorado occurred before the plume reached drinking water intakes and irrigation diversions. All downstream jurisdictions were notified in advance of the plume's arrival. The EPA's Gold King Mine website, http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine, contains comprehensive information that is responsive to many of the inquiries posed in your letter. Specifically, chronologies of the event have been posted, including a timeline of notifications, as well as photos and videos related to the incident.

The EPA collected and posted on the website water quality samples throughout the water system from multiple locations in Colorado and New Mexico to the Navajo Nation at daily intervals beginning on August 6, 2015. Sediment sampling began on August 11, 2015. Surface water samples taken prior to the plume's arrival were used to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Surface water samples were collected on August 6, 2015, at two locations prior to arrival of the plume along the Animas and San Juan Rivers in New Mexico. As of September 8, 2015, the EPA has collected 730 surface water samples and 488 sediment samples. Sampling data taken since the event indicates that metals and other constituents in water resources and sediment are returning to pre-event conditions.

Because the EPA and the state of Colorado have been working to assess impacts to water quality in the Animas River for several years, we have good information and data on background conditions in the river. On September 17, 2015, the agency requested comment on a draft long-

term monitoring plan for surface water, sediments and biology. The EPA will use this information to assess long-term needs and evaluate our progress in restoring the waters impacted by the Gold King Mine release.

Regarding funding allocations, as of September 28, 2015, the EPA has expended approximately $13.2M from the EPA Superfund Program, which is the statutory authority under which the EPA was operating in the Upper Animas Watershed. The Superfund Program includes two main programs – Removal and Remedial. Within the Remedial Program, remedial funds may be used for, among other things, pipeline activities, those that investigate the site for possible listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Remedial Program was using those resources to assess and investigate this site – all of this is possible prior to listing on the NPL. However, the program cannot use funds to conduct remedial action (the long-term remediation work) without the site being listed. The Removal Program also receives Superfund resources, via a different program project, to conduct removal related activities (generally, emergency response and other shorter-term response actions). Even on listed sites, it is possible to have removal actions taking place concurrent with the remedial process, as the removal program can step in to stop the releases while a more long-term remediation strategy is put in place.

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One of the initial lessons learned in the aftermath of the Gold King Mine release is that the EPA can improve its communications regarding releases and other environmental events that may affect multiple jurisdictions. To support response related notifications and communications between the EPA and our state, tribal and local partners, on September 4, 2015, I issued guidance to Regional Response Teams to strengthen their Regional Contingency Plans, particularly regarding the need to alert and coordinate with responders in downstream alerts. Timely state and federal notification is critical to allow impacted communities to prepare for potential environmental emergencies. Additionally, we have updated our website to include a new notification plan for Gold King Mine stakeholders throughout the watershed regarding potential impacts of any mining related activities.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-1859 or levine.carolyn@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Hal Rogers
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rogers:

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Mathy Stanislaus

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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The Honorable Jason Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

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Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Jeff Duncan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Duncan:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
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The Honorable Joe Heck, D.O.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Heck:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable John Ratcliffe
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Ratcliffe:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Keith Rothfus
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rothfus:

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Mark Amodei
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Amodei:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

One of our foremost priorities during the response has been to collect and publicly release information to help ensure the health and safety of affected communities. Per the preparedness, planning, and response process jointly developed with the state of Colorado, notification is a mutual responsibility of EPA and the state. On August 5, 2015, the day of the release, within two hours, notification of downstream jurisdictions within Colorado occurred before the plume reached drinking water intakes and irrigation diversions. All downstream jurisdictions were notified in advance of the plume's arrival. The EPA's Gold King Mine website, http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine, contains comprehensive information that is responsive to many of the inquiries posed in your letter. Specifically, chronologies of the event have been posted, including a timeline of notifications, as well as photos and videos related to the incident.

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Because the EPA and the state of Colorado have been working to assess impacts to water quality in the Animas River for several years, we have good information and data on background conditions in the river. On September 17, 2015, the agency requested comment on a draft long-

term monitoring plan for surface water, sediments and biology. The EPA will use this information to assess long-term needs and evaluate our progress in restoring the waters impacted by the Gold King Mine release.

Regarding funding allocations, as of September 28, 2015, the EPA has expended approximately $13.2M from the EPA Superfund Program, which is the statutory authority under which the EPA was operating in the Upper Animas Watershed. The Superfund Program includes two main programs – Removal and Remedial. Within the Remedial Program, remedial funds may be used for, among other things, pipeline activities, those that investigate the site for possible listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Remedial Program was using those resources to assess and investigate this site – all of this is possible prior to listing on the NPL. However, the program cannot use funds to conduct remedial action (the long-term remediation work) without the site being listed. The Removal Program also receives Superfund resources, via a different program project, to conduct removal related activities (generally, emergency response and other shorter-term response actions). Even on listed sites, it is possible to have removal actions taking place concurrent with the remedial process, as the removal program can step in to stop the releases while a more long-term remediation strategy is put in place.

The EPA Internal Review of the August 5, 2015, Gold King Mine Blowout Summary Report, also posted on the website, provides a thorough history of EPA's work at the Gold King Mine, as well as other mines in the area. The EPA and external entities will be thoroughly investigating the full facts regarding this incident and the response, and the agency will respond based on that information.

One of the initial lessons learned in the aftermath of the Gold King Mine release is that the EPA can improve its communications regarding releases and other environmental events that may affect multiple jurisdictions. To support response related notifications and communications between the EPA and our state, tribal and local partners, on September 4, 2015, I issued guidance to Regional Response Teams to strengthen their Regional Contingency Plans, particularly regarding the need to alert and coordinate with responders in downstream alerts. Timely state and federal notification is critical to allow impacted communities to prepare for potential environmental emergencies. Additionally, we have updated our website to include a new notification plan for Gold King Mine stakeholders throughout the watershed regarding potential impacts of any mining related activities.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-1859 or levine.carolyn@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Mia Love
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Love:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Michael Burgess, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Burgess:

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Sincerely,

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pompeo:

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Mike Coffman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Coffman:

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Paul Gosar
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gosar:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

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Assistant Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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OCT 20 2015

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Raul Labrador
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Labrador:

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Honorable Roger Williams
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Williams:

Thank you for your August 18, 2015, letter regarding the August 5, 2015, release at the Gold King Mine and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response and outreach efforts. Please be assured that the EPA is committed to continuing to work closely with response agencies and state, local and tribal officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns, and to evaluate impacts to the environment.

One of our foremost priorities during the response has been to collect and publicly release information to help ensure the health and safety of affected communities. Per the preparedness, planning, and response process jointly developed with the state of Colorado, notification is a mutual responsibility of EPA and the state. On August 5, 2015, the day of the release, within two hours, notification of downstream jurisdictions within Colorado occurred before the plume reached drinking water intakes and irrigation diversions. All downstream jurisdictions were notified in advance of the plume's arrival. The EPA's Gold King Mine website, http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine, contains comprehensive information that is responsive to many of the inquiries posed in your letter. Specifically, chronologies of the event have been posted, including a timeline of notifications, as well as photos and videos related to the incident.

The EPA collected and posted on the website water quality samples throughout the water system from multiple locations in Colorado and New Mexico to the Navajo Nation at daily intervals beginning on August 6, 2015. Sediment sampling began on August 11, 2015. Surface water samples taken prior to the plume's arrival were used to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Surface water samples were collected on August 6, 2015, at two locations prior to arrival of the plume along the Animas and San Juan Rivers in New Mexico. As of September 8, 2015, the EPA has collected 730 surface water samples and 488 sediment samples. Sampling data taken since the event indicates that metals and other constituents in water resources and sediment are returning to pre-event conditions.

Because the EPA and the state of Colorado have been working to assess impacts to water quality in the Animas River for several years, we have good information and data on background conditions in the river. On September 17, 2015, the agency requested comment on a draft long-

term monitoring plan for surface water, sediments and biology. The EPA will use this information to assess long-term needs and evaluate our progress in restoring the waters impacted by the Gold King Mine release.

Regarding funding allocations, as of September 28, 2015, the EPA has expended approximately $13.2M from the EPA Superfund Program, which is the statutory authority under which the EPA was operating in the Upper Animas Watershed. The Superfund Program includes two main programs – Removal and Remedial. Within the Remedial Program, remedial funds may be used for, among other things, pipeline activities, those that investigate the site for possible listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Remedial Program was using those resources to assess and investigate this site – all of this is possible prior to listing on the NPL. However, the program cannot use funds to conduct remedial action (the long-term remediation work) without the site being listed. The Removal Program also receives Superfund resources, via a different program project, to conduct removal related activities (generally, emergency response and other shorter-term response actions). Even on listed sites, it is possible to have removal actions taking place concurrent with the remedial process, as the removal program can step in to stop the releases while a more long-term remediation strategy is put in place.

The EPA Internal Review of the August 5, 2015, Gold King Mine Blowout Summary Report, also posted on the website, provides a thorough history of EPA's work at the Gold King Mine, as well as other mines in the area. The EPA and external entities will be thoroughly investigating the full facts regarding this incident and the response, and the agency will respond based on that information.

One of the initial lessons learned in the aftermath of the Gold King Mine release is that the EPA can improve its communications regarding releases and other environmental events that may affect multiple jurisdictions. To support response related notifications and communications between the EPA and our state, tribal and local partners, on September 4, 2015, I issued guidance to Regional Response Teams to strengthen their Regional Contingency Plans, particularly regarding the need to alert and coordinate with responders in downstream alerts. Timely state and federal notification is critical to allow impacted communities to prepare for potential environmental emergencies. Additionally, we have updated our website to include a new notification plan for Gold King Mine stakeholders throughout the watershed regarding potential impacts of any mining related activities.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-1859 or levine.carolyn@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Mathy Stanislaus

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator