To: Buchanan_Davis@flake.senate.gov[Buchanan_Davis@flake.senate.gov]; chandler_morse@flake.senate.gov[chandler_morse@flake.senate.gov]; Chelsea Lett[chelsea_lett@flake.senate.gov]; Clint Chandler[clint_chandler@flake.senate.gov]; Jason Samuels[jason_samuels@flake.senate.gov]; julie_katsel@flake.senate.gov[julie_katsel@flake.senate.gov]; kris_kiefer@flake.senate.gov[kris_kiefer@flake.senate.gov]; matthew_specht@flake.senate.gov[matthew_specht@flake.senate.gov]; gina_gormley@mccain.senate.gov[gina_gormley@mccain.senate.gov]; joe_donoghue@mccain.senate.gov[joe_donoghue@mccain.senate.gov]; mark_delich@mccain.senate.gov[mark_delich@mccain.senate.gov]; Meghan Kielty[meghan_kielty@mccain.senate.gov]; nick_matiella@mccain.senate.gov[nick_matiella@mccain.senate.gov]; rick_stilgenbauer@mccain.senate.gov[rick_stilgenbauer@mccain.senate.gov]; Shay Saucedo[shay_saucedo@mccain.senate.gov]; Blanca Rubio-Varela[blanca.varela@mail.house.gov]; carmen.gallus@mail.house.gov[carmen.gallus@mail.house.gov]; ken.montoya@mail.house.gov[ken.montoya@mail.house.gov]; ron.lee@mail.house.gov[ron.lee@mail.house.gov]; rick_stilgenbauer@mccain.senate.gov[rick_stilgenbauer@mccain.senate.gov]; gina_gormley@mccain.senate.gov[gina_gormley@mccain.senate.gov]; Tarallo, Julie (McCain)[Julie_Tarallo@mccain.senate.gov]; Carrillo, Pablo (McCain)[Pablo_Carrillo@mccain.senate.gov]; lfowler@coconino.az.gov[lfowler@coconino.az.gov]; mayor@cityofpage.org[mayor@cityofpage.org]; rrowley@coconino.az.gov[rrowley@coconino.az.gov]; petekenatcitty@navajo-nsn.gov[petekenatcitty@navajo-nsn.gov]; Judy.Kioski@azdema.gov[Judy.Kioski@azdema.gov]; Alesia Ash[alesia.ash@mail.house.gov]; C.J. Karamargin[cj.karamargin@mail.house.gov]; Justin Roth[justin.roth@mail.house.gov]; Kristen Douglas[kristen.douglas@mail.house.gov]; Pace McMullan[pace.mcmullan@mail.house.gov]; Patrick Ptak[patrick.ptak@mail.house.gov]; Clerkin Emerick, Amy[Amy.Emerick@mail.house.gov]; chris.kaumo@mail.house.gov[chris.kaumo@mail.house.gov]; glenn.miller@mail.house.gov[glenn.miller@mail.house.gov]; Jennifer Papworth[Jennifer.Papworth@mail.house.gov]; jessie.baxter@mail.house.gov[jessie.baxter@mail.house.gov]; martha.garcia@mail.house.gov[martha.garcia@mail.house.gov]; ruben.reyes@mail.house.gov[ruben.reyes@mail.house.gov]; Jeff Small[jeff.small@mail.house.gov]; michael.mansour@mail.house.gov[michael.mansour@mail.house.gov]; penny.pew@mail.house.gov[penny.pew@mail.house.gov]; tom.vanflein@mail.house.gov[tom.vanflein@mail.house.gov]; Trevor Pearson[trevor.pearson@mail.house.gov]; adam.deguire@mail.house.gov[adam.deguire@mail.house.gov]; chuck.gray@mail.house.gov[chuck.gray@mail.house.gov]; jon.mchatton@mail.house.gov[jon.mchatton@mail.house.gov]; lorissa.bounds@mail.house.gov[lorissa.bounds@mail.house.gov]; Beau Brunson[beau.brunson@mail.house.gov]; Kevin Knight[kevin.knight@mail.house.gov]; Oliver Schwab[oliver.schwab@mail.house.gov]; David Montes[david.montes@mail.house.gov]; Luis Heredia[luis.heredia@mail.house.gov]; Matt Lee[matt.lee2@mail.house.gov]; Pili Tobar[pili.tobar@mail.house.gov]; Xenia Ruiz[xenia.ruiz@mail.house.gov]; Bobby Cornett[bobby.cornett@mail.house.gov]; dan.hay@mail.house.gov[dan.hay@mail.house.gov]; Ellie Stern[ellie.stern@mail.house.gov]; shari.farrington@mail.house.gov[shari.farrington@mail.house.gov]; justin.unga@mail.house.gov[justin.unga@mail.house.gov]; Kendra Leiby[kendra.leiby@mail.house.gov]; Michael Wong[michael.wong@mail.house.gov]; Michelle Davidson[michelle.davidson@mail.house.gov]; alton_garrett@boxer.senate.gov[alton_garrett@boxer.senate.gov]; ameen_khan@boxer.senate.gov[ameen_khan@boxer.senate.gov]; Caridad_Sanchez@boxer.senate.gov[Caridad_Sanchez@boxer.senate.gov]; Joshua_Quigley@boxer.senate.gov[Joshua_Quigley@boxer.senate.gov]; Julissa Delgado[julissa_delgado@boxer.senate.gov]; kyle_chapman@boxer.senate.gov[kyle_chapman@boxer.senate.gov]; Maurice Lyles[maurice_lyles@boxer.senate.gov];

sean_moore@boxer.senate.gov[sean_moore@boxer.senate.gov]; stacey_smith@boxer.senate.gov[stacey_smith@boxer.senate.gov]; tom_bohigian@boxer.senate.gov[tom_bohigian@boxer.senate.gov]; yvette_martinez@boxer.senate.gov[yvette_martinez@boxer.senate.gov]; Zachary Coile[zachary_coile@boxer.senate.gov]; bill_kratz@feinstein.senate.gov[bill_kratz@feinstein.senate.gov]; Caitlin Meyer[caitlin_meyer@feinstein.senate.gov]; Callan Bruzzone[callan_bruzzone@feinstein.senate.gov]; james_peterson@feinstein.senate.gov[james_peterson@feinstein.senate.gov]; john_murray@feinstein.senate.gov[john_murray@feinstein.senate.gov]; john_watts@feinstein.senate.gov[john_watts@feinstein.senate.gov]; katie_gross@feinstein.senate.gov[katie_gross@feinstein.senate.gov]; Kenneth Rooney[Kenneth_Rooney@feinstein.senate.gov]; Kevin Chang[kevin_chang@feinstein.senate.gov]; molly_o'brien@feinstein.senate.gov[molly_o'brien@feinstein.senate.gov]; Sabiha Khan[sabiha_khan@feinstein.senate.gov]; shelly_abajian@feinstein.senate.gov[shelly_abajian@feinstein.senate.gov]; trevor_daley@feinstein.senate.gov[trevor_daley@feinstein.senate.gov]; chuck_podolak@flake.senate.gov[chuck_podolak@flake.senate.gov]; Ernesto_Rodriguez@Heinrich.Senate.Gov[Ernesto_Rodriguez@Heinrich.Senate.Gov]; Jared T. Touchin[jtouchin@navajo-nsn.gov]; Arbin Mitchell[arbinmitchell@navajo-nsn.gov]; ninaachester@navajo-nsn.gov[ninaachester@navajo-nsn.gov]; Charity K. Sam[cksam@navajo-nsn.gov]; Francelia Johnson[fjohnsonopvp@gmail.com]
Cc: Tenley, Clancy[Tenley.Clancy@epa.gov]; Russo, Rebecca[Russo.Rebecca@epa.gov]; Snyder, Raquel[Snyder.Raquel@epa.gov]; Levine, Carolyn[Levine.Carolyn@epa.gov]; Distefano, Nichole[DiStefano.Nichole@epa.gov]; Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]; Zito, Kelly[ZITO.KELLY@EPA.GOV]; Janifer, Pamela[Janifer.Pamela@epa.gov]; Bowles, Jack[Bowles.Jack@epa.gov]; Faulk, Libby[Faulk.Libby@epa.gov]; Peterson, Cynthia[Peterson.Cynthia@epa.gov]; Miullo, Nat[Miullo.Nat@epa.gov]; Higuchi, Dean[Higuchi.Dean@epa.gov]; Keener, Bill[Keener.Bill@epa.gov]; Blumenfeld, Jared[BLUMENFELD.JARED@EPA.GOV]; Harris-Bishop, Rusty[Harris-Bishop.Rusty@epa.gov]; Allen, HarryL[Allen.HarryL@epa.gov]; Manzanilla, Enrique[Manzanilla.Enrique@epa.gov]; EOC Liaison[EOC_Liaison@epa.gov]; R8_documentation_unit_leader@epa.gov[R8_documentation_unit_leader@epa.gov]; Guria, Peter[Guria.Peter@epa.gov]; Ebbert, Laura[Ebbert.Laura@epa.gov]; Asher, Jonathan[Asher.Jonathan@epa.gov]; Vaught, Laura[Vaught.Laura@epa.gov]; Yogi, David[Yogi.David@epa.gov]; Tenley, Clancy[Tenley.Clancy@epa.gov]; Vela, Austin[Vela.Austin@epa.gov]; McGrath, Shaun[McGrath.Shaun@epa.gov]; Card, Joan[Card.Joan@epa.gov]; Smith, Paula[Smith.Paula@epa.gov]; Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]; Bowles, Jack[Bowles.Jack@epa.gov]; Rupp, Mark[Rupp.Mark@epa.gov]; Calvino, Maria Soledad[Calvino.Maria@epa.gov]
From: Maier, Brent
Sent: Thur 9/17/2015 7:51:56 PM
Subject: Gold King Mine - EPA Seeks Input on Draft Monitoring Plan Following Gold King Mine Release

Dear Colleagues:

The following press release is being issued today by the EPA Headquarters press office. If you have questions or need any additional information, please give me a call.

Regards,

Brent Maier

Congressional Liaison

Telephone: 415.947.4256

CONTACT:

Press@epa.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2015

EPA Seeks Input on Draft Monitoring Plan Following Gold King Mine Release

Agency also releases Incident Command transition plan

Washington – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today released a draft monitoring plan to further evaluate pre- and post-incident conditions following the August 5 Gold King Mine release in Colorado.

"EPA has been sampling conditions since the spill to ensure the safety of residents in the watershed," said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "This monitoring plan represents the next phase of this important work, and reflects our commitment to continue working closely with state, local and tribal officials to evaluate the potential impacts of the spill."

Surface water and sediment have returned to pre-event conditions, but the agency is continuing water sampling out of an abundance of caution. EPA is seeking input on the draft conceptual monitoring plan from the states of Colorado, New Mexico and Utah; the Navajo Nation, Southern Ute, and Ute Mountain Ute tribes; and local governments in the watersheds. EPA recently held a call with tribal, state, and local officials to discuss the draft plan and solicit their input. EPA has asked for comments from these stakeholders before Oct. 8, so the agency can initiate monitoring this fall. EPA is committed to working with stakeholders to use sound science to monitor the rivers under differing seasonal conditions to determine if fluctuations in contaminant levels reflect pre-spill variability in the watershed.

Sampling activities will include water quality, sediment quality, biological community, and fish tissue under a variety of flow conditions at 23 sites in Cement Creek, the Animas and San Juan rivers and the upper section of Lake Powell within Colorado, Southern Ute Reservation, New Mexico, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, the Navajo Nation, and Utah. Where pre-incident data are available, monitoring at these sites will enable comparison of pre- and post-incident conditions. Where pre-incident data are not available along some river stretches of the San Juan River, EPA will collect data; however, these data may not be able to be used to gauge effects of the Gold King Mine spill as they may reflect contributions from discharges, spills, runoff and erosion over preceding decades.

After collecting data for one year, EPA will review results to determine appropriate next steps. EPA is coordinating with its regulatory partners and affected stakeholders to understand other organizations' monitoring efforts, prevent duplication, and promote data sharing. Additional monitoring and study efforts may occur outside the focused scope of this monitoring plan.

Also today, EPA released an Interim Final Plan for Incident Command Transition. Recognizing that water and sediment are now being maintained at pre-existing conditions, the agency will be scaling down the Incident Command Post in Durango, CO, and transitioning to a long-term operational plan that can be supported by the agency's Regional Offices.

The agency also posted new surface water sampling data collected August 24 and 25, 2015, from locations along the Animas River.

The agency continues to continually update data, documents and other information to the Gold King Mine response website: http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine

To review the Monitoring Plan: http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/post-gkm_draft_conceptual_monitoring_plan_9_17_2015.pdf

To review the Transition Plan: http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/incident_command_transition_document_9_17_2015_interim_final.pdf

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Please visit the following links or reach out to the contacts listed below if you have any questions or need any additional information:

1. On our website http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine
2. Through state or local sources: http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/gold-king-mine-resources-information
3. By calling EPA's toll-free hotline number: 844-607-9700
4. Or by calling your Regional contact directly.

For Region 8, which includes CO and UT: Rebecca Russo, russo.rebecca@epa.gov, 303-312-6757

For Region 6, which includes NM: David Gray, gray.david@epa.gov, 214-665-8120

For Region 9, which includes AZ, CA, NV and the Navajo Nation: Brent Maier, maier.brent@epa.gov, 415-947-4256

Regards,

Brent Maier

Congressional Liaison

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX

75 Hawthorne St. (OPA-3)

San Francisco, CA 94105

Ph: 415.947.4256