To: stewart_bybee@heller.senate.gov[stewart_bybee@heller.senate.gov]; bruce.miller@mail.house.gov[bruce.miller@mail.house.gov]; stacy.parobek@mail.house.gov[stacy.parobek@mail.house.gov]; yolanda_garcia-banuelos@reid.senate.gov[yolanda_garcia-banuelos@reid.senate.gov]; ashley_carrigan@heller.senate.gov[ashley_carrigan@heller.senate.gov]; susan_lisagor@reid.senate.gov[susan_lisagor@reid.senate.gov]; jason_unger@reid.senate.gov[jason_unger@reid.senate.gov]; trey_reffett@reid.senate.gov[trey_reffett@reid.senate.gov]; greg.facchiano@mail.house.gov[greg.facchiano@mail.house.gov]; lucas_ingvoldstad@reid.senate.gov[lucas_ingvoldstad@reid.senate.gov]; mary_conelly@reid.senate.gov[mary_conelly@reid.senate.gov]; robert_elliott@reid.senate.gov[robert_elliott@reid.senate.gov]; david.rosenbaum@mail.house.gov[david.rosenbaum@mail.house.gov]; jay.gertsema@mail.house.gov[jay.gertsema@mail.house.gov]; keith.hughes@mail.house.gov[keith.hughes@mail.house.gov]; alexander_mcdonough@reid.senate.gov[alexander_mcdonough@reid.senate.gov]; andrew_lingenfelter@heller.senate.gov[andrew_lingenfelter@heller.senate.gov]; emy_lesofski@heller.senate.gov[emy_lesofski@heller.senate.gov]; jason.riederer@mail.house.gov[jason.riederer@mail.house.gov]; jack_finn@heller.senate.gov[jack_finn@heller.senate.gov]; kristen_orthman@reid.senate.gov[kristen_orthman@reid.senate.gov]; sara_moffat@reid.senate.gov[sara_moffat@reid.senate.gov]; kathleen_rozner@reid.senate.gov[kathleen_rozner@reid.senate.gov]; meghan.brown@mail.house.gov[meghan.brown@mail.house.gov]; courtney.temple@mail.house.gov[courtney.temple@mail.house.gov]; sherry.fehremann@mail.house.gov[sherry.fehremann@mail.house.gov]; edith.fernandez@mail.house.gov[edith.fernandez@mail.house.gov]; tim.hogan@mail.house.gov[tim.hogan@mail.house.gov]; nancy.juarez@mail.house.gov[nancy.juarez@mail.house.gov]; hayley_douglas@heller.senate.gov[hayley_douglas@heller.senate.gov]; matt_mcknight@reid.senate.gov[matt_mcknight@reid.senate.gov]; rodney.emery@mail.house.gov[rodney.emery@mail.house.gov]; mike.naft@mail.house.gov[mike.naft@mail.house.gov]
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Bcc: MAIER, BRENT[Maier.Brent@epa.gov]
From: MAIER, BRENT
Sent: Wed 2/6/2013 7:22:45 PM
Subject: EPA Press Release: EPA Requires Nevada Gold Mines to Correct Reporting Violations, Pay $618,000

Dear Colleagues:

The following press release is being issued today by the EPA Region IX 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

For Immediate Release: February 6, 2013

Media Contact: Rusty Harris-Bishop, 415-972-3140, harris-bishop.rusty@epa.gov

EPA Requires Nevada Gold Mines to Correct Reporting Violations, Pay $618,000

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached a settlement with three gold mining companies, all subsidiaries of Barrick Gold Corporation, for their failures to correctly report toxic chemical releases and waste management activities. The companies, Barrick Cortez, Inc., Barrick Gold US, Inc. and Homestake Mining Company, agreed to pay a total of $278,000 in fines and spend an additional $340,000 to conduct an environmentally beneficial project.

The violations involved incorrect reporting under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) at the Cortez Gold Mine near Crescent Valley, the Ruby Hill Gold Mine near Eureka, and the Bald Mountain Gold Mine near the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge, all in Nevada.

"Cyanide, lead and mercury used at these mines have the potential to pose a health threat," said Jared Blumenfeld, the EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "We insist on accurate reporting of chemical releases so that citizens have a clear idea of the risk from the facilities near their communities."

Careful analysis of the mines' records by EPA inspectors revealed that the facilities failed to submit timely, complete and correct Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) reports in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, for toxic chemicals. These chemicals include cyanide compounds used to extract gold from the ore mined at the facilities, and lead and mercury compounds produced during the extraction process. Under the settlement, the Barrick gold companies will audit and correct their TRI reports for 2005 through 2011 to comply with EPCRA. There is no evidence to suggest that the violations posed any immediate danger to workers at the facilities or local communities.

The agreement requires a $340,000 supplemental environmental project at the Cortez mine to identify the metal compounds formed in its oxide mill process. The gold companies will also perform audits at the other Barrick facilities in the U.S. (in Nevada and Montana), correct reporting violations, if any, and pay a $10,000 penalty per violation, not to exceed $250,000.

The EPA requires reporting of toxic chemical releases under EPCRA, and facilities that manufacture, process, or use toxic chemicals over certain quantities must file annual reports estimating the amounts released to the environment, treated or recycled on-site, or transferred off-site for waste management. These reports are submitted to EPA and the State or Tribe with jurisdiction over the facility. The EPA compiles this information into a national TRI database and makes it available to the public.

Metal ore mining accounts for 98% of total TRI releases reported to EPA in Nevada. This investigation and enforcement are part of an ongoing national effort that began in 2008 to ensure that gold mining facilities are in compliance, and that the public has accurate and complete information about the facilities in their community. Barrick gold mining facilities in the U.S. produced approximately 3.38 million ounces (105.6 tons) of gold in 2011, and the Cortez Gold Mine is one of the largest gold mines in the world.

To find information on the Toxics Release Inventory visit: http://www.epa.gov/tri

EPA's environmental databases, including the TRI data, can be accessed at: http://www.epa.gov/enviro

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