Governor Bullock Calls on EPA to List Shuttered Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Plant on National Priorities List of Superfund Sites

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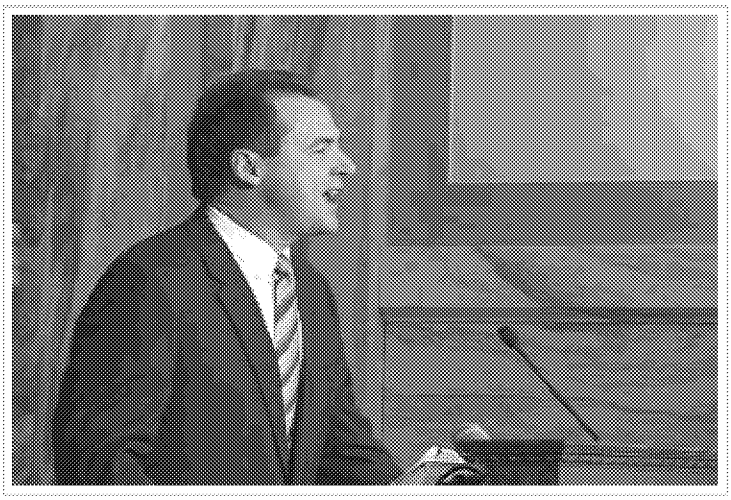

Helena, MT - Citing contamination to groundwater and surface water, as well as sediments in Cedar Creek and the Flathead River, Governor Steve Bullock today sent a letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Shaun McGrath encouraging the agency to list the former Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) plant on the Superfund National Priority List (NPL). The CFAC plant was in operation from 1955 until it closed in 2009.

"I'm concerned that if this issue remains unaddressed, the contamination from the site is serious enough to pose long-term risks to the community and to Montana's environment, including the Flathead River," Bullock said in his letter.

The NPL is the list of national priorities among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States. It is used to guide the EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation.

In his letter, Bullock went on to encourage the EPA to take critical steps if the site is listed, including:

• Support and maintain a close working relationship with DEQ as they further characterization and cleanup;
• Encourage community involvement and coordination with Columbia Falls and Flathead County;
• Continue periodic residential well sampling until there is sufficient data or cleanup to indicate that contamination of residential wells is not a potential risk;
• Where possible, use local contractors that can maximize the potential for local employment in the investigation and cleanup process; and
• Consider the local community's redevelopment goals when evaluating cleanup needs.

"The plant was a critical part of the economy of Columbia Falls and the site has been idle for too long," Bullock continued. "It has tremendous potential for redevelopment and will be an important anchor in the future of the region."

Bullock's letter to McGrath is available at:
http://governor.mt.gov/Portals/16/docs/2015PressReleases/McGrathShaun_2015_02_18.pdf

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