OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR

ANGELA MCLEAN
LT. GOVERNOR

February 17, 2015

Shaun L. McGrath- Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8
1595 Wynkoop Street, 8RA
Denver, Colorado 80202-1129

Subject: Federal Superfund Listing of Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant

Dear Mr. McGrath:

I write to offer my support for listing the idled Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant located near Columbia Falls on the Superfund National Priority List (NPL).

Sample results from the investigation show that historical activities at the site have contaminated groundwater and surface water or sediments in Cedar Creek and the Flathead River. I am 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.

It is my understanding that there is sufficient data to justify an NPL listing. Most importantly, there is widespread local support for NPL listing of the site to ensure appropriate cleanup that will ultimately allow for redevelopment of the site. Public comments provided during the most recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) meeting, and letters the state has received from the Columbia Falls City Council and Flathead Basin Commission, demonstrate this support (attached).

If the site is listed on the NPL, I request that EPA take the following steps:

- Support and maintain a close working relationship with DEQ as you proceed with further characterization and cleanup.
- Encourage community involvement and coordination with Columbia Falls and Flathead County.

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- Based upon concerns we have heard from local residents that use private wells for drinking water, 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.
- 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. It has tremendous potential for redevelopment and will be an important anchor in the future of the region. Time is of the essence. I appreciate EPA's efforts, and have directed DEQ to provide assistance as the listing process, site characterization, cleanup plans and cleanup implementation proceed. As always, I strongly urge you to oversee a process that ensures protection of human health and the environment while being timely, transparent, and cost-effective. Please work with Tom Livers, Director of DEQ, and his staff as you move forward.

Sincerely,

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

Attachment (1)

cc: Senator Steve Daines
Senator Jon Tester
Representative Ryan Zinke
Martin Hestmark, EPA Region 8
James Woolford, EPA Headquarters
Tom Livers, Director, Montana DEQ
Donald Barnhart, Mayor, City of Columbia Falls
Flathead County Commissioners
Joe Russell, Flathead County Health Department
Julie DalSoglio, EPA Montana Office
Rob Parker, EPA Denver