Message

**From**: Thomas, Deb [thomas.debrah@epa.gov]
**Sent**: 1/25/2016 4:20:27 PM
**To**: Hestmark, Martin [Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov]
**Subject**: Re: Urgent Columbia Falls

Hi Martin,
It looks like HQ is okay waiting until tomorrow to contact Testers office but would like clarification on our messaging today. Please reach out to Joe and Mike to get us on the same page. Based on our comm strat the Superfund Alternative approach is under consideration and if there is an NPL listing it is not expected sooner than fall 2016. Please provide key messages, by early this afternoon, to correct/clarify the remarks attributed to Mike.

On Jan 22, 2016, at 4:57 PM, Hestmark, Martin <Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov> wrote:

> Deb - this decision had not yet been made. Once u am briefed we will be in front of you, Shaun and Joan. There are pluses and minuses and we have differences between
> CFAC and Smurfit that we need to work out. There are also timing issues that complicate delaying listing
> .
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>
> > **From:** "Thomas, Deb" <thomas.debrah@epa.gov>
> > **Date:** January 22, 2016 at 3:49:10 PM PST
> > **To:** "Hestmark, Martin" <Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov>, "Murray, Bill" <Murray.Bill@epa.gov>, "Vranka, Joe" <vranka.joe@epa.gov>, "Stavnes, Sandra" <Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov>
> > **Cc:** "Card, Joan" <Card.Joan@epa.gov>
> > **Subject: Urgent Columbia Falls**
> >
> > See messages below. I spoke to Nichole and will need to get back in touch with her early Monday to arrange a call with Testers office. Please advise me on key messages and the accuracy of the comments attributed to EPA in the article below. Deb
> >
> > Begin forwarded message:
> >
> > > **From:** "Distefano, Nichole" <DiStefano.Nichole@epa.gov>
> > > **Date:** January 22, 2016 at 2:51:19 PM MST
> > > **To:** "Thomas, Deb" <thomas.debrah@epa.gov>
> > > **Subject: Fwd: Hungry Horse CFAC Story**
> > >
> > > Hey Deb
> > >
> > > I forgot Shaun was out. Can we chat about this?
> > >
> > > On cell 202-570-8609
> > >
> > > Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Distefano, Nichole" <DiStefano.Nichole@epa.gov>
**Date:** January 22, 2016 at 4:04:59 PM EST
**To:** "McGrath, Shaun" <McGrath.Shaun@epa.gov>
**Subject: Fwd: Hungry Horse CFAC Story**

Hey Shaun

Can we discuss?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Laslovich, Dylan (Tester)" <Dylan_Laslovich@tester.senate.gov>
**Date:** January 22, 2016 at 4:03:50 PM EST
**To:** 'Distefano Nichole' <DiStefano.Nichole@epa.gov>
**Cc:** "Campbell, Chad (Tester)" <Chad_Campbell@tester.senate.gov>, "DiLuccia, Janelle (Tester)" <Janelle_DiLuccia@tester.senate.gov>
**Subject: Fw: Hungry Horse CFAC Story**

Hey Nichole:

I wanted to be sure you saw the below story and talk about a path forward. EPA has been very helpful and good at communicating with the community and Sen Tester's staff on this issue which has led to a ton of progress. The below is a step in the wrong direction and we risk losing the good partnership that has been built.

I would love to get an audience with someone high up at region 8 as well as someone at national to discuss this on Monday. I think I understand what the agency is saying hear but it wasn't well recieved.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartph one on the Verizon Wireless 4G LTE network.

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**From:** Banks, Marnee (Tester) <Marnee_Banks@tester.senate.gov>
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2016 3:27 PM
**To:** Campbell, Chad (Tester); Swanson, Dayna (Tester); Wise, James (Tester); Laslovich, Email; DiLuccia, Janelle (Tester)
**Subject:** Hungry Horse CFAC Story

# CFAC Superfund listing could come as early as March, company, Columbia Falls mayor oppose listing

By CHRIS PETERSON Hungry Horse News // Jan 22, 2016

The Columbia Falls Aluminum Co. could see a Superfund listing as early as March, project manager Mike Cirian of the Environmental Protection Agency told a liaison panel Thursday night.

"It could be listed this spring, yet," Cirian told the crowd.

The announcement came as a surprise to panel members, who said they were led to believe last fall the EPA was leaning toward a Superfund Alternative Approach. The alternative would make the company clean up the site under Superfund standards, but avoid an actual Superfund listing. County and city leaders both want to avoid the stigma of the Superfund listing attached to the city's name, particularly in the age of Google, where the term Columbia Falls and Superfund could pop up in search engines for years. That's not something they want, particularly as the city looks to promote tourism and cleaner, lighter, industry in town.

But Cirian noted the alternative approach has been used only once in EPA's Region 8, which includes Montana, Idaho, the Dakotas,

Utah and Colorado. Last fall, Cirian expressed optimism that CFAC would be a good fit. But in Thursday's meeting, he noted it wasn't his decision — the move to list would come from higher up in the EPA's management.

"That (decision) is out of my control at this time," Cirian said.

Columbia Falls Mayor Don Barnhart was frustrated by the apparent change in tone from the EPA.

He said the city pursued having the site listed as a way to get the company to do something about the plant, which had sat idle for years after it shut down. Montana Sen. Jon Tester, a Democrat, went to bat for the city, and the site was listed on the National Priorities List, which qualifies it as a Superfund site. Testing on the site has found cyanide in the groundwater, but none at levels above safe thresholds in nearby residential wells.

"We used it as a hammer to get them going," Barnhart said.

But now the company has come to the table, so-to-speak, and recently put up a $4 million guarantee to have a remedial investigation and feasibility study completed. Now city leaders don't want a Superfund listing.

"Let's push as a group for this alternative listing," Barnhart said.

But putting the bullet back in the barrel isn't necessarily that easy. If the EPA doesn't list the site this March, it would likely look at it again in the fall. Cirian told the crowd that if they really wanted the alternative listing, they should start writing letters to the EPA offices.

There's also politics in play. Montana Congressman Ryan Zinke, a Republican, has always opposed listing, claiming that once sites are listed in Montana, they never come off the list. Republican Sen. Steve Daines has remained neutral on the issue, saying the decision should come from the community. Chad Campbell, an aide to Tester, told the panel that if they wanted the alternative, they should also write to Tester's office. Montana Gov. Steve Bullock has also supported Superfund listing for the site.

But the Flathead County Commissioners, all of which are Republican opposed it. County Commissioner Phil Mitchell, who sits on the panel, said the future of the site rested in lawmaker's hands.

"I think this is a political decision," he said.

The company opposes listing.

"We think we can do (the cleanup) better and faster," John Stroiazzo, an engineer and project manager for CFAC said.

Listing or not, investigation at the site will start this spring, with 43 wells to be drilled. Test results from those wells should come in February of 2017. Those tests will be the first measure of the extent of contamination at the site, which has several landfills. The entire investigation will likely take about four to five years alone, an actual cleanup could take years after that.

The liaison panel, which had been meeting every month, will now meet less frequently. Cheryl Driscoll of CFAC said each meeting costs the company about $25,000 in travel and employee costs. The next meeting is scheduled in May as drilling starts. There will be an on-site tour and meeting to follow. A time and date was not set.

People interested in weighing in on the Superfund listing are encouraged to contact Cirian directly at cirian.mike@epa.gov or by mail at US EPA Region 8, 108 East Ninth St. Libby, MT 59923.

Resident Ray Negron perhaps brought the best perspective to the future of the site.

"No one wants the stigma of a Superfund site, but we all want it cleaned up," he said.