The Anaconda Aluminum Co Columbia Falls Reduction Plant Operable Unit 1, also known as Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Plant, is located two miles northeast of Columbia Falls, Mont. It covers approximately 1340 acres north of the Flathead River, a fishery that includes the federally designated threatened bull trout and the westslope cutthroat trout, a state of Montana species of concern. The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Plant operated between 1955 and 2009 and created significant quantities of spent potliner material during smelting operations, a federally listed hazardous waste, as a byproduct of the aluminum smelting process. Spent potliner material is known to contain cyanide compounds that can leach into groundwater. EPA's initial site evaluation indicates that ground water and surface water at the site contain various contaminants of concern, including cyanide, fluoride, and various metals. EPA proposed the site on March 26, 2015 and anticipates final listing in late 2016.

On November 30, 2015, an Administrative Order on Consent for RI/FS (AOC) was entered into between EPA and the respondent, Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, LLC. While the AOC allows for periodic oversight billings to the respondent, EPA did not receive any past cost settlement to place into a special account for field oversight in FY2016. In addition, since the AOC was entered into after Region 8 had set FY2016 Pipeline Operations AOA funding priorities, $500,000 in RI/FS oversight is currently identified as an alternate need in the SEMS database for FY2016. Therefore, no funds are available to allow the RPM to open up a new RI/FS oversight work assignment with CDM Smith under Region 8's RAC Contract. RPM has begun scoping out the Statement of Work and developing an Independent Government Cost Estimate but cannot submit this to CDM Smith once final due to lack of funds. If HQ provides funding to Anaconda Aluminum Co Columbia Falls Reduction Plant Operable Unit 1, these funds will be obligated immediately through the issuance of a Work Assignment Form (WAF) to CDM Smith directing them to begin development of a RI/FS oversight workplan.

Having adequate Pipeline resources to conduct RI/FS oversight will enable the region to: 1) help convince the community that without an NPL listing the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Plant will not get cleaned up, and 2) provide sufficient oversight of the respondent's field activities in 2016 as specified in the workplan that accompanies the AOC. Anticipated field activities include but are not limited to 1) installing over 50 wells in the surficial and bedrock aquifers that underlay the site; 2) site reconnaissance; 3) soil gas screening, and 4) geophysical surveys and 5) discrete elevation groundwater sampling. Split samples are anticipated to be collected by EPA's contractor. While Region 8's unmet need identified in SEMS for FY16 is $500,000, the RPM is able to provide sufficient oversight of the respondent's field activities with $300,000.