

May 21, 2014

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of April 28, 2014, regarding community concerns with decommissioning activities at the Homestake Mining Company (Homestake) site north of Milan, NM. Specifically, you identified concerns regarding the rate of water treatment and NRC coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) on regulatory actions at the site.

Significant groundwater cleanup has occurred at the site since Homestake's current groundwater Corrective Action Program (CAP) was approved by the NRC in 1990. Homestake is now evaluating additional treatment technologies to supplement and improve the efficiency of groundwater remediation, and has identified several of these alternative treatment technologies in its revised CAP. We are working expeditiously to review the revised CAP.

The NRC continues to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that we have with EPA regarding reclamation and remedial activities at the Homestake site, and also continues to coordinate with NMED. In that regard, both EPA and NMED provided comments to the NRC on Homestake's revised CAP. In accordance with the MOU and our commitment to keeping NMED informed, NRC will continue to provide EPA and NMED with copies of all license amendments, which affect site closure plans, for comment prior to issuance.

In fulfilling our safety mission to protect people and the environment, we will continue our careful attention to the site to ensure that it is remediated safely and expeditiously through the regulatory requirements of the CAP. We will continue to work cooperatively on remediation matters with EPA and NMED. Our immediate goal is to ensure that the groundwater remediation and closure of the tailings pile is performed safely with the ultimate goal of transfer of the site to the U.S. Department of Energy for long-term stewardship.

The NRC is committed to the protection of public health and safety at the Homestake site and is moving expeditiously to resolve all outstanding matters related to remediation of the groundwater. If you have any questions, please contact me or Amy Powell, Acting Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA Michael F. Weber for/

Mark A. Satorius
Executive Director
for Operations

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NAME	RRihm	TStokes	JWeil	DPersinko (JParrot)	MWeber (Actor) for MSatorius
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