



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

November 10, 2015

ATTN: Document Control Desk, Deputy Director
Decommissioning and Uranium Recovery Licensing Directorate
Division of Waste Management and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop T8 F5
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Subject: Resumption of Pumping from Alluvial Aquifer at Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site

To Whom It May Concern:

This notice is to inform you that on November 5, 2015 I received written notification (enclosed) that the Navajo Nation lifted its use-restriction on waters within the San Juan River system. This use restriction was implemented by the Navajo Nation following the Gold King Mine spill and was in effect since August 7, 2015. In response to the use restriction, the Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management (DOE-LM) temporarily suspended pumping from the floodplain alluvial aquifer, which contains legacy contamination from milling operations at the former uranium processing facility at Shiprock.

Now that the pumping restriction is lifted, the DOE-LM will restart the groundwater remediation pumping from Trench 1 and groundwater recovery wells 1089 and 1104 in the floodplain alluvial aquifer. In addition, pumping from Trench 2 will also resume. Pumping from Trench 2 had been shut off on June 18, 2015 because, during spring runoff, the majority of water pumped from Trench 2 is relatively clean water from the river. DOE-LM originally planned to resume pumping from Trench 2 after spring runoff flows in the San Juan River receded, no more than 60 days after the pumping was stopped. However, the pumping restriction that resulted from the Gold King Mine spill had prevented the normal resumption of pumping from Trench 2.

If you have any questions about this action, please contact me at 970-248-6018. Please address any correspondence to:

U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
2597 Legacy Way
Grand Junction, CO 81503

Sincerely,

Mark Kautsky
Site Manager

NM5520

Enclosure



cc w/enclosure:

S. Austin, Navajo EPA

J. Nofchissey, Navajo UMTRA

D. Orlando, NRC

D. Miller, Navarro (e)

File: SHP 0400.02 (rc grand junction)

Sites\Shiprock\11-6-15 Shiprock Resumption of Pumping Notice (NRC).docx



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

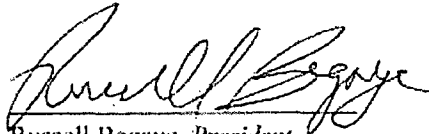
MEMORANDUM

TO: Bidtah Becker, Division Director
Division of Natural Resources

Ramona Antone-Nez, Division Director
Division of Health

Herman Shorty, Chairperson
Commission on Emergency Management

FROM:


Russell Begaye, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION

DATE: October 22, 2015

SUBJECT: RESTRICTIONS LIFTED FOR THE SAN JUAN RIVER

The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) has determined that, based on the information currently available to it as well as assurances from the U.S. EPA, the San Juan River is now safe to use for both irrigation and livestock purposes. Shortly after the release of toxic contamination from Gold King Mine, the Nation closed the San Juan River to all uses. The Navajo Nation kept the River closed until our own data confirmed that the River was safe to use.

I concur with the NNEPA that the San Juan River may be used for the limited purposes of livestock and irrigation use. The Navajo Nation EPA will continue to monitor the San Juan River and share their data findings with the Navajo people.

We are working diligently to protect the rights of the Navajo Nation and the Navajo people, and to obtain full, fair, and prompt recovery for the losses suffered by the Navajo people. We are also working closely with our neighbor states and other agencies to ensure this never happens again. All aspects of Navajo life ways from the microbiology of the river to plants and animals have been impacted, but we intend to recover and we are asking USEPA to make us whole. That we are now opening the River for the limited purposes of irrigation and livestock use in no way undermines the trauma and immediate and long-term harms caused by the devastating contamination of our ecosystem. Water is Life and it is our responsibility to protect the River, our waterways and nature's water cycles.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Donald Benn, Executive Director of the Navajo Nation EPA at 928-871-7692.