



Electronic Delivery

May 28, 2024

Brad Bingham, Facilities Manager
Homestake Mining Company of California
Grants, New Mexico 87020
bbingham@homestakeminingcoca.com

**Re: Approval of Corrective Action Report Evaporation Pond Pipeline, Unauthorized Discharge
DP-200, Homestake Mining Company**

Dear Brad Bingham,

On April 18, 2024, the Mining Environmental Compliance Section (MECS) of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) received oral notification from Homestake Mining Company (Homestake) of an unauthorized discharge on April 17, 2024, from an inactive line previously used to transfer water from Evaporation Pond #2 (EP2) to Evaporation Pond #1 (EP1) (see Figure 1). The discharge was the result of a faulty valve, and a full internal investigation is being conducted to establish the root cause. The discharge was discovered by an employee upon returning to the pump house after turning on the pump and inspecting the totalizer flow meter to verify flow rates. Staff immediately turned off the pump and notified their supervisor upon discovery of the release. A conservative estimate of the volume of water discharged is 8,400 gallons, based upon a 1,200 gallon per minute flow rate for approximately seven minutes.

The release caused erosion of the interim cover on the western out-slope of EP1 exposing tailing within the rill near the top of the EP1 berm. Most of the release went into EP2 with a small portion of the released water traveling down the access road between EP1 and EP2.

A combined 7- and 15-day Corrective Action Report (CAR) was received by NMED on April 24, 2024.

NMED hereby approves the CAR in accordance with Paragraph (7) of Subsection A of 20.6.2.1203 NMAC, and the NMED Delegation Order dated February 19, 2024, through which the Cabinet Secretary has delegated this authority to the Director of the Water Protection Division and Chief of the Ground Water Quality Bureau. NMED's approval of the CAR is based on the following actions taken by Homestake, outlined below.

Homestake completed the following corrective actions:

- 1) Approximately five yards of washed-out material was scraped and transported to the Trash Pit on the small tailings pile for disposal under a Radiation Work Permit (RWP).

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- 2) Borrow soil was hauled and placed over the exposed tailings and surrounding area under the same RWP.
- 3) The Alternate Radiation Safety Officer took radiological surveys to confirm that radiation emissions in the release area had returned to background levels after scraping of the roadway and placement of the new cover material.
- 4) A blank flange was installed on the inactive line to EP1 on April 19, 2024, to prevent future water flow through this line.

In the unlikely event that residual surface water did infiltrate through approximately 60 feet of unsaturated soil to groundwater, it is worth noting the spill area is located upgradient of the hydraulic barrier created by injection of water into the alluvial aquifer. Potential migration of impacted groundwater is controlled by the injection wells and collection wells located adjacent to the spill.

NMED may require additional corrective actions if information becomes available indicating that the corrective actions proposed or taken are inadequate and/or groundwater contamination occurs as a result of the described discharge. NMED approval of the CAR does not relieve the permittee of its responsibility to comply with any other applicable federal, state and/or local laws and regulations.

Please contact Corey Dimond of MECS at (505) 795-4216 or corey.dimond@env.nm.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Justin Ball, Chief
Ground Water Quality Bureau

CC: Ron Linton, NRC (ron.linton@nrc.gov)
Mark Purcell, EPA (purcell.mark@epa.gov)
Joseph Fox, MECS Program Manager (joseph.fox@env.nm.gov)
Anne Maurer, Mining Act Team Leader, MECS (anne.maurer@env.nm.gov)
MECS Reading File

Figure 1: Discharge Overview 4-17-2024

