

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY****REGION IX****75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901****OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

October 12, 2016

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
SR-241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

Thank you for your follow-up letter of September 16, 2016 to Administrator Gina McCarthy on behalf of your constituents in Dewey-Humboldt, Arizona, regarding EPA's activities at the Iron King Mine/Humboldt Smelter Superfund Site. Your letter was referred to EPA's Pacific Southwest Region because our office is responsible for the site's investigation and cleanup.

You asked about EPA's plans to complete the Remedial Investigation (RI) Report, and I'm pleased to say that we have now released it to the public. It was sent to the Town Manager, Yvonne Kimball, on September 26, and is available at the Dewey-Humboldt Town Library, as well as online. This comprehensive report is a major milestone, marking the end of the investigation and sampling phase and the beginning of the evaluation of cleanup solutions.

The majority of the more than 580 residential yards that EPA evaluated do not pose a risk to residents. However, we identified approximately 15 to 30 yards with elevated levels of lead that require cleanup actions, which are currently scheduled for Spring 2017.

As a first step in engaging town leaders and residents on EPA's residential soil cleanup plans, we issued a fact sheet (enclosed) that outlines the work to come and scheduled a briefing for the Town Council on October 18. As part of our outreach during the cleanup phase, EPA will update the Town Council quarterly on progress. In November, EPA plans to hold public meetings about the yards' cleanups. We will also communicate directly with affected property owners and tenants about activities that will occur in their yards, working with them to develop the specific details of treatment and restoration needed for each individual yard.

You requested that EPA cap the mine site to prevent any future contamination. EPA is required to follow a process for selecting the cleanup remedy for the Iron King Mine and other areas of the site with extensive tailings contamination. While a cap is anticipated to be one component of the cleanup, EPA must evaluate comprehensive solutions to this complex site. We are now initiating the Feasibility Study, as required by the Superfund process, to evaluate and compare alternatives for this cleanup. When it is concluded, a cleanup remedy will be selected to address the long-term threats posed by the pile and other tailings-contaminated areas at the site.

Community involvement is part of this process. Therefore, we will keep the residents and Town Council informed, and we will ask for input as cleanup alternatives are identified.

We trust that this information is responsive to your request and serves the needs of your constituents in Dewey-Humboldt. If we can be of further assistance, please have your staff call our Congressional Liaison, Brent Maier, at (415) 947-4256.

Sincerely,


for Alexis Strauss
Acting Regional Administrator

Enclosure