

Danyel Soulier

From: Greg Lovato
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 2:47 PM
To: Scott Gilles
Cc: Brad Crowell; Jim Lawrence
Subject: FW: [DRAFT INTERNAL DELIBERATIVE] Gov Office E-mail - Anaconda Announcement
Attachments: DRAFT - AnacondaStatusUpdate DME GEL2 SCT_2.docx; 191107 outreach strategy_revised Council.pdf

Scott,

We are requesting concurrence on the following steps for an announcement regarding the Anaconda mine next week. This is a priority to maintain progress and the current schedule for cleanup at the Site. This is a highly anticipated step forward for the Site and has many eyes on it.

Proposed Action

Announcement (draft word document attached) week of May 4 that the 15 year groundwater investigation of the Anaconda Copper Mine Site has been completed and the day of the announcement NDEP is formally approving the final groundwater investigation report. We will also announce that bottled water delivery to residences with domestic wells outside of groundwater impacted by historical mine activities will be phased out over a 6 month period, and that NDEP will be offering to install reverse osmosis systems free of charge in those homes where bottled water is being phased out. The decision to phase out bottled water will affect approximately 20 residences on county land and ~90 residences on Yerington Paiute Tribe (YPT) land.

Background

- This is the culmination of over 15 years of field work and technical analysis.
- Approval of the investigation report is a major milestone, as groundwater issues at the site have been a major focus for EPA, the community, Yerington Paiute Tribe, and the media.
- NDEP conducted extensive public outreach starting in November 2018 (with 2 public meetings in 2019 and a series of individual letters to well owners receiving bottled water) notifying the community that it would be reviewing the bottled water program as the groundwater investigation came to completion.
- YPT operated a municipal well that serves the affected tribal residences, the well has not and will not for the foreseeable future be impacted by mine-related contamination that includes a treatment system that provides water which meets drinking water standards.
- Although not required, since they are outside the groundwater affected by the plume, for the ~20 residences on county land NDEP reached out to City of Yerington City Council, Lyon County Commission, and YPT Chairman and none were interested in connecting those residences to a municipal system, even with substantial financial assistance from the state.
- NDEP has executed a separate agreement whereby ARC will fund all the staff, contractor, and equipment costs for the reverse osmosis system installation.
- This is a somewhat delicate announcement related to YPT bottled water delivery as NDEP has no jurisdiction over the Site actions (including delivery of bottled water) related to Tribal land. We have coordinated with EPA for them to have a desk statement in conjunction with YPT that emphasizes YPT drinking water system performance and safety, making bottled water delivery to Tribe no longer necessary. Although EPA agrees that the groundwater contamination from the mine has not affect groundwater under YPT, YPT has not agreed to make any kind of announcement regarding groundwater contamination. EPA had a draft joint strategy prepared with YPT in November that is attached for reference. We are working to finalize their desk statement right now.

Next Steps (In order of sequence)

Pre-requisite step

- Obtain approval from GO for path forward.

Days leading up to Announcement

- Schedule embargoed interview with Amy Alonzo, local RGJ Mason Valley News reporter who has been focused on reporting from a local perspective and has attended the NDEP public outreach events.
- Notify EPA, ARC, BLM, and GO of date for issuing announcement
- Notify Yerington Mayor and Lyon County Manager of date for announcement
- Notify YPT Chair of date for announcement
- 1 business day prior – COB 5 pm NDEP sends official letter via US postal service notifying residences of schedule for bottled water phaseout and additional information on how to receive installation of a free reverse osmosis treatment system

Day of announcement (4 business days after obtaining GO approval and at least 1-2 business days after embargoed interview with Amy Alonzo)

- Issue approval letter to ARC
- Notify Amy Alonzo that story can be released and “break” on Mason Valley News
- After 1 hour issue NDEP press release (including YPT Chair, EPA, City and County contacts on distribution list)
- EPA has desk statement available
- Post announcement on social media (including Facebook Yerington Community Group) and on news section of DCNR website

Thanks Scott and we look forward to our discussion tomorrow.

Greg

Greg Lovato

Administrator

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