



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

JUN 29 2016

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gardner:

In a letter dated August 19, 2015, you requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) look at certain specific aspects of the Gold King Mine release in the program evaluation we had announced on August 17, 2015. We announced the program evaluation in a notification memorandum available at <http://go.usa.gov/3H7Mk>. On November 4, 2015, we identified additional issues we planned to review, and additional matters learned since our work began, in a second notification memorandum available at <http://go.usa.gov/cCSGm>.

You are also aware that, concurrent with our program evaluation, a number of investigations—including by the EPA OIG's Office of Investigations—have been underway. While our program evaluation team and investigators communicate about their respective efforts on the Gold King Mine issues, a certain amount of separation has to be observed. Specifically, there is investigative material that we cannot reveal in any report about our program evaluation until the investigation reaches a point where the U.S. Department of Justice and the EPA OIG's Office of Investigations inform us that we may do so. Many of your questions to us, including those that go to the heart of what you asked us to address, directly implicate and will have to be answered in part by investigative results that are not currently releasable.

We have concluded that it is not possible to provide you with a meaningful final report until we can address and incorporate some of those investigative results, which we cannot do at this time. We will keep you informed of progress and status, and will do our utmost to be able to finalize our program evaluation report as promptly as possible.

Similar letters are being sent to Senators Bennet, Hatch, Heinrich, Lee and Udall.

If you have any questions, please contact Alan Larsen at (202) 566-2391.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Carolyn Copper".

Carolyn Copper  
Assistant Inspector General for  
Program Evaluation