



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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project Notification:
Gold King Mine Release
OIG Project No. OPE-FY15-0059

FROM: Carolyn Copper, Assistant Inspector General /s/
Office of Program Evaluation

TO: Shaun McGrath, Regional Administrator
Region 8

Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research on the cause of, and the EPA's response to, the August 5, 2015, release from the Gold King Mine in Colorado. Approximately 3 million gallons of water containing heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury were released into a tributary to the Animas River. This project is being initiated based on a congressional request.

Due to the scope of the issues involved, the OIG's Office of Program Evaluation, Office of Audit, and Office of Investigations will work collaboratively to conduct parts of this review. Your offices may receive joint OIG office requests for meetings and information, as well as individual OIG office requests for meetings and information. The OIG may also issue subsequent notification memos as our work progresses.

We plan to conduct work at Region 8 and at EPA headquarters. We will request documents, and interview relevant managers and staff in these locations and elsewhere as necessary. Throughout the project, as appropriate, we will provide updates on a regular basis. In carrying out this work, the OIG will take all reasonable efforts to minimize disruption to the EPA's ongoing response work.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978 to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request your resolution if an agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested records to the OIG, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the Administrator and include the incident in the Semiannual Report to Congress.

Questions related to the project can be addressed to me at copper.carolyn@epa.gov or (202) 566-0829; Kevin Christensen, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, at christensen.kevin@epa.gov or (202) 566-1007; or Patrick Sullivan, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, at sullivan.patrick@epa.gov or (202) 566-0308.

cc: Barry Breen, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Deb Thomas, Deputy Regional Administrator, Region 8
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