

EPA ORGANIZATION

Internal deliberative pre-decisional - FOR USE BY 2024 PRESIDENT-ELECT TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS ONLY

ISSUE SUMMARY:

Grants Mining District Abandoned Uranium Mines (McKinley and Cibola Counties, New Mexico)

New Mexico's Grants Mining District is home to 97 priority abandoned uranium mines that have caused widespread surface and groundwater contamination. Mining occurred from the 1950s through the 1980s. Region 6, with tribal, state, and federal partners, is working to assess and cleanup priority mine sites using the Grants Mining District's Five-Year Plan to establish priorities. Health impacts from uranium mining include lung cancer, kidney disease, and autoimmune diseases. In addition to the mine sites, the District is also home to five uranium mills impacting human health and the environment that are subject to regulatory oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

KEY POINTS:

EPA has entered into agreements with Potentially Responsible Parties to characterize the nature and extent of the contamination and clean up sites for both surface and groundwater impacts from legacy uranium mining. EPA has been working with Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, other federal agencies, states, and tribes, to identify potential options to address the risks to human health. The federal government has been found liable for a portion of cleanup costs at some mine sites due to the Atomic Energy Commission's role in facilitating uranium mining and purchasing ore to support early nuclear defense and energy capabilities. EPA also brings to your attention, the Jackpile-Paguate Mine, located on the Pueblo of Laguna, which was one of the world's largest open pit uranium mines and is on the National Priorities List. The responsible party is characterizing the site and developing cleanup alternatives which EPA will present to the public for comment in the 2028-2029 timeframe.

ONGOING/UPCOMING REVIEWS FOR FY2025:

EPA will continue to provide oversight, with support from New Mexico, of parties performing assessment and cleanup work.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congress | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> States | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribes | <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Federal Agency |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NGO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Governments | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public | | | |

MOVING FORWARD:

EPA Region 6 will continue to work with tribal, state, and federal partners to implement the Grants Mining District Five-Year Plan. EPA will continue to update stakeholders (community members, NGOs, and elected officials) on progress under the Five-Year Plan. EPA Region 6 will continue to identify potentially responsible parties to negotiate agreements for assessment and cleanup of mine sites.