



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

AUG 01 2016

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

NOW THE
OFFICE OF LAND AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Dear State/Tribal/Local and Congressional Leaders:

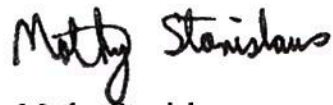
I am writing to share with you a report the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed to summarize the EPA's efforts in the affected areas since the release of acidic, mine-influenced water on August 5, 2015, from the Gold King Mine (GKM) in Colorado. The report is titled *One Year After the Gold King Mine Incident: A Retrospective of EPA's Efforts to Restore and Protect Communities* and is enclosed for your reference.

The EPA recognizes the impacts of the GKM release to the communities and residents who live along and use the Animas and San Juan Rivers. Since the release, the EPA has dedicated more than \$29 million to a wide array of activities in order to respond to the release and to protect residents and natural resources in the area. Specifically, the EPA is providing more than \$2 million in funding to empower states and tribes with monitoring of their own water resources to improve timely notification of any future incidents. Reimbursement of the costs for state, local and tribal partners to respond to the incident is also underway, with over \$1.6 million provided to date. While some requests cannot appropriately be funded within the EPA's Superfund program, the EPA continues to evaluate additional incident-related expenses requested and will expedite distributing these funds. Individuals, businesses and local and state governments claiming property damage and personal injury have also filed claims under the Federal Tort Claims Act. The EPA is coordinating with the U.S. Department of Justice and we hope to be responding to these claims in the coming weeks.

The EPA accepted responsibility for the GKM spill and continues to work with our federal, state and tribal partners to implement and share best practices and lessons learned to ensure that those affected by the legacy of over 160,000 abandoned mines in the western United States can benefit from our work. For residents impacted by the many decades of acidic mine-influenced water drainage into the Animas and San Juan Rivers, we have proposed a National Priorities Listing for the Bonita Peak Mining District (which includes Gold King Mine), which we estimate discharges approximately 5.4 million gallons per day. We are also committed to pursuing collaborative approaches to improve water quality impacted by pollution that crosses state and tribal borders.

We thank you for your participation in these efforts and for your work to ensure our efforts complement the many activities underway in your area. I look forward to continuing to work together to seek more permanent solutions to these complex environmental challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mathy Stanislaus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator
Office of Land and Emergency Management

Enclosure