



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

National Advocacy Center
901 E St, N.W., Suite 400
Washington D.C. 20004
202-797-6800
www.nwf.org

May 9, 2013

The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair
White House Council on Environmental Quality
727 Jackson Place
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Bob Perciasepe, Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
United States Army Corps of Engineers
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310

Re: New Report on the Impacts of Hardrock Mining on Tribal Communities

Dear Ms. Sutley, Mr. Perciasepe, and Ms. Darcy:

For more than a century, American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives have suffered the impacts of hardrock mining while enjoying few of its benefits. A new National Wildlife Federation report, **Honoring the River: How Hardrock Mining Impacts Tribal Communities**, tells the story of hardrock mining and tribes, from the checkered history of federal legislation allowing mining companies to lease minerals on tribal lands-often without tribal consent-to the many new mines being proposed near tribal communities.

The report also describes the legacy of water pollution left by the mining industry and urges the Obama Administration to close two loopholes in the Clean Water Act's regulations. These loopholes currently allow mines to treat rivers, lakes, and wetlands as waste dumps for toxic, acid-producing tailings. Water pollution caused by improperly stored mining waste has had a particularly devastating effect on tribal communities.

Tribes view water as sacred, something to be honored. We can all learn from that perspective. Mines should never be allowed to discharge untreated industrial waste into living waters. Closing the CWA's mining loopholes would not stop hardrock mining, but it would help protect Native Americans, and all Americans, from the chemicals, heavy metals, and acid drainage produced by modern mines. The

Administration has made a strong public commitment to clean water and environmental justice. NWF urges you to demonstrate that commitment by making the straightforward regulatory changes needed to protect our water and communities. We urge you to honor the river.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Schweiger', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Larry Schweiger
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation

cc: Gina McCarthy, Environmental Protection Agency
Nancy Stoner, Environmental Protection Agency
Meg Gaffney-Smith, Army Corps of Engineers
Chip Smith, Army Corps of Engineers
Jeffrey Zients, Office of Management and Budget