

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 21, 2015

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on  
Environment & Public Works  
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Boxer:

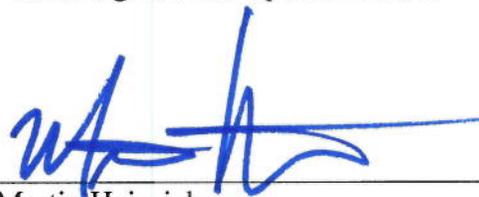
We write to request that the Committee on Environment and Public Works schedule an oversight hearing on the Gold King Mine spill that occurred on August 5, 2015, in Southwest Colorado. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its contractors were working on this abandoned mine, they caused the release of approximately three million gallons of contaminated water into the Animas River and polluted the river through Southwest Colorado, the Southern Ute Indian Reservation, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation.

The Environmental Protection Agency has admitted fault for the spill and for poor communication alerting affected communities in the immediate aftermath. The EPA has also committed to reimbursing local businesses, governments, farmers, tribes, and residents for costs incurred due to the spill. This commitment is welcome, but we believe that Congressional oversight of the spill should be done to ensure that Congress has a full understanding of the events that led to the release, the response to the release, measures to provide clean water and reimbursements for affected communities and ongoing monitoring to ensure clean water into the future. This knowledge will enable Congress to better understand and respond to the issues involved with ongoing cleanup of thousands of abandoned mines throughout our nation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of a hearing on this important issue.



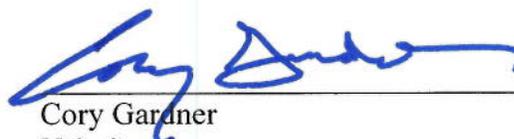
Tom Udall  
U.S. Senate



Martin Heinrich  
U.S. Senate



Michael Bennet  
U.S. Senate



Cory Gardner  
U.S. Senate