

Metallic Mining Rules Hearing Sept 15, 2016

Testimony of Stephen G. Heinz, Cumberland, Maine

Jobs created for mining Maine's metallic sulfides would be short term, and the profits would go out of the country.

Callahan Mine in Brookville in Hancock County operated until 1972. Clean-up operations are still ongoing. Remediation work would likely to be the only long-term jobs mining Maine's metallic sulfide deposits would provide. Proponents of the revised rules want us to believe that "modern" mining methods would prevent an environmental disaster. **Maine is not a mining state - look what has happened in the last few years in states with extensive mining experience:**

- The **Elk River chemical spill** occurred on January 9, 2014 when crude 4-methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM) was released from a Freedom Industries facility into the Elk River, in Charleston, West Virginia. The chemical spill occurred upstream from the principal West Virginia American Water intake and treatment and distribution center. Following the spill, up to 300,000 residents within nine counties in the Charleston, West Virginia metropolitan area were without access to potable water. Crude MCHM is chemical foam used to wash coal and remove impurities that contribute to pollution during combustion. The "do-not-use" advisory for drinking water from West Virginia American Water's system began to be gradually lifted by West Virginia state officials on January 13 based upon "priority zones."
- **A dam at a waste pond on Mount Polley Mine in the Cariboo region of British Columbia, Canada, full of toxic heavy metals burst on August 4, 2014**, releasing 10 million cubic meters of wastewater and 5 million cubic meters of toxic slurry into Hazeltine Creek, Quesnel Lake and Polley Lake. The full extent of the damage may remain unknown for years or even decades to come. The "Do Not Use" order that applies to the impact zone directly affected by the breach (includes Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek, and an area within 100 meters of the shoreline sediment deposit, where Hazeltine Creek runs into Quesnel Lake) is expected to remain in place indefinitely.
- The **2015 Gold King Mine wastewater spill** is a 2015 [environmental disaster](#) at the Gold King Mine near [Silverton, Colorado](#). EPA personnel along with workers for Environmental Restoration LLC (a Fenton, Missouri, company under EPA contract to mitigate pollutants from the closed mine) caused the release of toxic wastewater. The maintenance was necessary because local jurisdictions had previously refused [Superfund](#) money to fully remediate the regions' derelict mines due to a fear of lost tourism. After the spill, Silverton Board of Trustees and the San Juan County Commission approved a joint resolution seeking Superfund money. EPA, the State of Colorado and local health authorities continue to caution that there may be higher concentrations of metals in discolored sediment/soil. People living, playing and working near the affected waterways should avoid discolored sediment/soil. Children under age 6 should be supervised when playing in and around the river to ensure they don't ingest river water or sediment.

While these accidents all differ in a number of respects, the lesson is clear: There are significant risks associated with mining, keeping and storing the toxic liquids that result. MCHM will break down in the environment; elements like mercury, lead and arsenic do not. Maine is not a mining state; we have no experience overseeing mining operations.

The Bald Mountain area is naturally high in arsenic. Mining of the volcanic sulfides in any form will bring more of this and heavy metals to the surface. **The wet storage of the tailing that the revised rules permit is a disaster waiting to happen.**

Besides damaging our environment, a spill would damage Maine's clean, green image that continues to make Maine products attractive to so many consumers, and our State a popular tourist destination.