

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2010

The Honorable Steven Chu
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
Forrestal Building
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0800

Dear Secretary Chu,

As you prepare the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Request, we respectfully request you maintain the current level of appropriations funding for cleanup of the uranium tailings pile in Moab, Utah. As you know, \$108 million was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for this project, and that funding has supported nearly 60 percent of the total shipments out of Moab. Maintaining a level of funding between \$70-90 million in FY12 is critical to ensuring that cleanup is complete by its target deadline of 2019, as required by the FY08 National Defense Authorization Act, and to minimizing the period when the Colorado River and public will be at risk. The longer the pile remains in its current location, the longer the risk of contamination remains.


As you know, in 1956 a mill was built at the confluence of Moab Wash with the Colorado River to extract uranium from regional ores. When the mill was closed in 1984 about 16 million tons of processed ore residues called "tailings" had been piled 65-90 feet high in an unlined, 130 acre impoundment next to the river. Because the site is on an alluvial plain, the chemicals, uranium and other heavy metals that leach from the pile into the ground are carried through the sands and gravels to the river by the natural ground water flow. When DOE took over responsibility of the Moab site in 2001, it announced that the preferred solution for the Moab site were active ground water remediation and removal of the tailings, mostly by rail, to a site near Crescent Junction, Utah, about 30 miles from the river.

Unfortunately the tailings removal process did not officially begin until 2009. To date, two million tons have been moved, and the higher levels of funding appropriated through ARRA will allow for an additional 1.2 million tons to be moved by September 30, 2011. Furthermore, this additional funding through ARRA has resulted in 200 additional jobs within Grand County. Without maintaining this level of funding in Fiscal Year 2012, these new jobs and the expedited progress on cleanup are threatened.


Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that the tailings removal in Moab is carried out in a safe, environmentally sound, and timely manner.

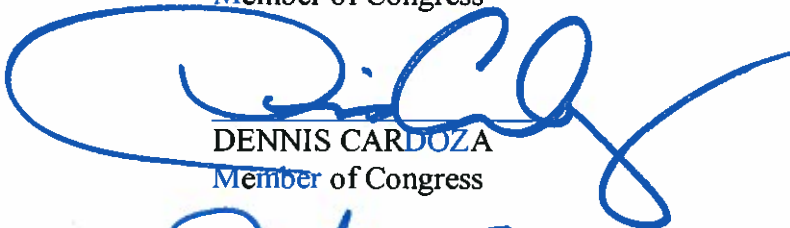
Sincerely,

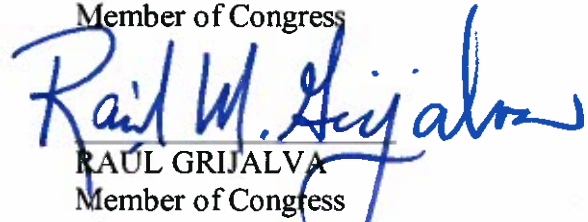

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Member of Congress


HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress


GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

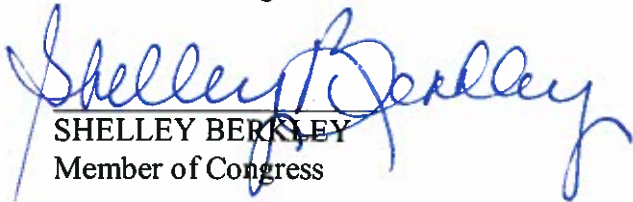

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