

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2006

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James M. Jeffords
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Jeffords:

We would like to request that a hearing and mark-up be held as soon as possible on S. 1848, the Good Samaritan "Cleanup of Inactive and Abandoned Mines Act." This bipartisan legislation is sponsored by each of us, by Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, and by Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia. We are hopeful that we can enact this legislation before the end of the 109th Congress.

The Good Samaritan bill would help states that face continuing pollution from inactive and abandoned hardrock mines. These mines are scattered throughout the country, particularly in the West, and often pose health and safety hazards to rivers, streams, and nearby communities. All too often, the owners and operators of these mines are long gone or are financially unable to satisfy their legal cleanup obligations. The sites languish and continue to pollute. Our bill would help promote cleanup of these abandoned and inactive mine sites.

Community groups, companies and individuals who are not under a legal duty to clean up these mines sometimes wish to do so. They are often dissuaded from this community service, however, by the additional liabilities and risks they would incur if they act in the public interest.

Our bill encourages these "Good Samaritans" to complete these cleanups pursuant to a permit issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill would protect a Good Samaritan from liabilities outside the strict obligation to complete a

carefully considered cleanup plan. State approval and full public participation is required in every instance.

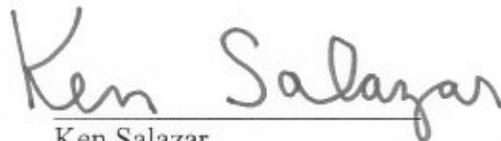
Our legislation already enjoys broad support. It stands the best chance in more than a decade of effort to become law. Governors Owens and Guinn, of Colorado and Nevada respectively, have endorsed S. 1848, joining the National Mining Association and the Colorado Mining Association. Several major mining companies, including Newmont, AngloGold Ashanti, and Phelps Dodge, have added their endorsements as well. The Colorado Water Congress and the Western Business Roundtable have also endorsed the bill. Finally, Administrator Stephen Johnson has expressed his strong support for passing Good Samaritan legislation this year.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and for your leadership on the Committee.

Sincerely,



Wayne Allard
United States Senator



Ken Salazar
United States Senator