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**BEFORE THE RADIOACTIVE & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMITTEE  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

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**IMPORTANT SAN JUAN BASIN STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THE GOLD KING MINE  
SPILL OF 2015, THE BONITA PEAK MINING DISTRICT SUPERFUND SITE, AND THE CONSERVATION OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES PERTAINING TO THE SAN JUAN AND ANIMAS RIVER SYSTEMS**

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**IN THE MATTER OF COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM #3: UPDATE ON THE GOLD KING MINE SPILL AND  
RESTORATION PROGRAM**

September 16, 2021

Shawna Casebier  
Staff Attorney  
NM Legislative Council Service  
411 State Capitol  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: Presenting to RHMC September 20 Gallup

Dear Ms. Casebier and RHMC Members:

I'm writing to you on behalf of San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) to provide pertinent stakeholder information regarding the Gold King Mine Spill of 2015, the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site, and the conservation of critically important rivers systems in the San Juan Basin.

Founded in 1986, SJCA is a 501(c)(3) organization that advocates for clean air, pure water, and healthy lands – the foundations of resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies in the San Juan Basin. Representing more than 1,000 dues-paying members, and thousands more supporters, SJCA works to protect water quality and quantity, healthy public lands, and safe energy development in Southwest Colorado and Northwest New Mexico. SJCA frequently partners with federal agencies, local governments, and other non-profits to ensure the long-term health of our region's natural and human communities.

Since our founding, SJCA has devoted significant resources to the restoration and protection of river systems in the San Juan Basin. Over the last 5 years, through the Alliance's Animas Riverkeeper program, we have engaged the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its federal and state partners in the Superfund process to remediate abandoned mines and mining related sites at the headwaters of the Animas River. This engagement has included attendance at important meetings throughout the watershed, developing relationships with site scientists and project managers, the submission of

technical comments, water quality data collection, and providing opportunities for SJCA members and the public to engage directly with the federal cleanup process.

In 2019, alongside our conservation partners, we successfully formed an official Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the Bonita Peak Superfund Site, which has greatly enhanced community involvement in the ongoing environmental investigations and cleanup. Our 15-member CAG serves as a public forum for representatives of diverse community interests to present and discuss their concerns related to the federal decision-making process and provides opportunities for EPA to present its work. The CAG also offers a unique opportunity for EPA to hear – and seriously consider – community preferences related to environmental investigations, remediation activities, and overall environmental and human health goals. Members of the CAG have decades of institutional knowledge about the mine sites contained within the Superfund designation and broad experience across agriculture, mining, mine remediation, recreation, environmental science, local government, local business, and public health sectors.

Outside of the Superfund process and further down the watershed, we collaborate with the San Juan Watershed Group (based in Farmington, NM) to improve water quality conditions in the San Juan River and its tributaries. Formed in 2001, the San Juan Watershed Group (SJWG) works with partners to conduct water quality sampling to identify impairments and their sources while implementing bacteria and nutrient reduction projects, with the goal of mitigating these impairments to acceptable levels. These projects involve working with landowners, government agencies, local entities, and other partners to implement best management practices (BMPs), and they have shown considerable success in implementation and restoration results.

If it is helpful to the committee, please find the contact information for the above-mentioned groups attached to this letter. We also offer ourselves as a source of information regarding the progress of the Superfund cleanup and the mitigation of other pollutants that challenge the health of the Animas and San Juan rivers.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we look forward to the discussion at the upcoming committee hearing.

Respectfully submitted:

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San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District (SJSWCD) and San Juan Watershed Group (SJWG)

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