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Press release

Kennecott Utah Copper's South Zone Property Removed from Superfund Consideration after Accelerated Cleanup

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Today, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) announced their withdrawal of the proposal to list the Kennecott Utah Copper's South Zone on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL).

Kennecott Utah Copper's (KUC) South Zone was removed from the NPL, the list of potential Superfund sites, after Kennecott accelerated the source control and clean up in areas of concern. The site was originally proposed for listing on January 18, 1994, out of concern for contaminated groundwater and soil near the Bingham Canyon Mine. The areas requiring remediation were primarily historic mining sites and operations from the last century, many KUC inherited when it purchased the property.

KUC knew it could work with state and federal government agencies to get the work done more efficiently and avoid the stigma and high cost of working through the Superfund program. In 1991, under Rio Tinto ownership, KUC approached the EPA and the UDEQ with a proposal for an accelerated cleanup program. Under this agreement, KUC was willing to continue and complete the clean up of lands tainted by mining, rather than wait for a Superfund listing. At the time, KUC's proposal was groundbreaking.

In September 1995, the UDEQ, EPA and KUC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing that upon KUC's completion of the cleanup projects, the EPA agreed to take no further action related to the final listing of the sites. KUC accelerated the cleanup and has spent more than \$400 million cleaning up sites on the South and North Zones. A federal South Zone Consent Decree was signed in May 2008, which assures money is set aside for ongoing groundwater cleanup. Kennecott anticipates the removal of the North Zone from the NPL in the coming year.

"By taking a cooperative approach to the cleanup under the MOU, the work was performed more efficiently and cost effectively than if we had used the traditional Superfund process," said Andrew Harding, President and CEO, KUC. "This is an example of how collaboration and cooperation can result in the best outcome for the community, business and government."

“This is a milestone for Kennecott and for the communities surrounding it. What it means is a cleaner and healthier environment as a result of more than a decade of soil and groundwater cleanup that has eliminated or substantially reduced risk to human health and the environment,” said Kelly Payne, Remediation Manager, KUC. “Hundreds of acres of land have been remediated, where trees and grasses are growing now. Groundwater cleanup systems are complete and Kennecott is providing clean drinking water to several surrounding communities through the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District.”

The cleanup work, before and after photos, a map of the zones and lessons learned can be found in the report, *Reclaiming the environment from a century of mining: A status report on the Last Century Program*. The report and a Q&A are available at www.kennecott.com

About Kennecott Utah Copper

As the second largest copper producer in the United States, Kennecott Utah Copper provides about 13 percent of the US's copper needs. Kennecott's Bingham Canyon Mine is the largest man-made excavation in the world. It has produced more copper ore, 18.1 million tons, than any mine in the world. Every year, Kennecott produces approximately 300,000 tons of copper, along with 500,000 ounces of gold, 4 million ounces of silver, about 30 million pounds of molybdenum, and about 1 million tons of sulfuric acid, a by-product of the smelting process. Rio Tinto purchased Kennecott Utah Copper in 1989 and has invested about \$2 billion in the modernization of KUC's operations. KUC has also spent more than \$350 million on the cleanup of historic mining waste and \$100 million on groundwater cleanup. KUC employs 1,800 people and hundreds of contractors. www.kennecott.com

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the United Kingdom, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa. www.riotinto.com

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