



News Release

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Kennecott Withdraws Plans for Mine Rock Crusher Expansion

Groups call decision a win for air quality and withdraw permit challenge

SALT LAKE CITY, UT (October 22 , 2015) Air quality advocates are expressing their appreciation this week for the recent news that Kennecott Copper has abandoned its plans to construct a new rock crusher plant as part of the mine's overall expansion effort. As a result, Western Resource Advocates, representing Utah Physicians for Healthy Environment (Utah Physicians) and FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake are announcing a dismissal of their challenge to the state's Approval Order authorizing construction of the plant.

Because the rock crusher plant would have added an estimated 33 tons of PM_{2.5} (fine particulate matter) and 267 tons of PM₁₀ (coarse particulate matter) emissions per year to the Salt Lake City nonattainment area, where wintertime concentrations of particulate matter often exceed health-based national standards at alarming rates, the groups are calling the decision a win in the ongoing efforts to address the region's persistent air quality problems.

The organizations had filed a Request for Agency Action with the Utah Director of Environmental Quality in December of 2013 seeking revocation of the permit allowing Kennecott to construct the rock crusher plant. As part of its challenge, the groups echoed comments they had already submitted on the project, asking that Kennecott be required to reduce emissions of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ from the proposed facility to "offset" the planned increase in particulate emissions with equal emission reductions, and to do a better job of monitoring and reporting plant air pollution. In May of this year, Kennecott asked the Division of Air Quality to revoke the Rock Crusher Plant permit (the permit approved by DAQ that the groups were challenging). That permit was officially rescinded in July. This led to today's dismissal by air quality advocate of their legal challenge.

Beyond the additional PM contributions to region's air-shed, the new rock crusher plant would have meant an increase in the footprint of the company's tailings impoundment located on the shore of Great Salt Lake. The impoundment is also a source of particulate emissions.

“We are very pleased that Kennecott decided to withdraw a proposal that would have increased fine particulate air pollution in an air-shed struggling to meet national standards,” said lead attorney Joro Walker, Western Resource Advocates Utah Office Director. “This is great news for public health and the environment along the Wasatch Front.”

“Particulate pollution is a significant public health issue along the Wasatch Front and we were convinced that Kennecott’s expansion plans would have made the situation worse,” said Tim Wagner, Executive Director of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. “We are grateful that Kennecott has withdrawn its plans.”

“Utah deserves clean air and a healthy Great Salt Lake and Kennecott’s expansion plans were going to be a problem. We applaud Kennecott for not increasing its air pollution and maintaining its existing operations without expanding” said Lynn de Freitas, Executive Director of FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake.

PM_{2.5} refers to especially fine particles that are so small that they can lodge deep into the lungs and other organs, causing serious health problems. Major concerns for human health from exposure to both PM_{2.5}, and the larger PM₁₀ include: harm to breathing and respiratory systems, damage to lung tissue, cancer, genetic impairment, loss of intelligence, and premature death. The most vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, and people with chronic lung disease, influenza, or asthma, are especially sensitive to the adverse effects of particulate matter. *To receive a copy of the Request for Agency Action filed in 2013 contact joro.walker@Westernresources.org*

For the last 25 years Western Resource Advocates has been one of the West’s leading conservation groups protecting the region’s air, land and water. WRA’s lawyers, scientists and economists craft innovative solutions for the most complex natural resource challenges in the region. Go to www.westernresourceadvocates.org and follow us on Twitter @WRADV.

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment was formed in 2007 during one of Utah’s worse inversions. The organization consists of approximately 350 medical professionals within Utah, and another 4,000 supporting members of the public. UPHE is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of the citizens of Utah by promoting science-based health education and interventions that result in progressive, measurable improvements to the environment. UPHE can be found at www.uphe.org or on Facebook.

FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake is a nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to preserve and protect Great Salt Lake Ecosystem through education, research, advocacy and the arts.