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Dillon

Miners for Safe Ore Processing and Inspection

I represent Miners for Safe Ore Processing and Inspection who support regular inspections and safe construction of leach pads to ensure safe gold mining. We support safe and efficient gold mining that will not harm fish, wildlife, water, or the environment.

In Montana right now the law says that it is only illegal for the cyanide from leach pads goes into state waters. It says very little on well water and ground water quality. There is no law set to have regular inspections of leach pad liners for running mines on the state level or the federal level.

Right now there is a material on the market that has held up to tests where it was placed in very strong acid for 120 days. This was Very Low Density Polyethylene (VLDPE) a type of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC). Only VLDPE held up in multiple tests to many types of stress. After 120 days there was still some noticeable stress but the material held up.

I suggest that there be a law put in place making regular inspections every six months on leach pads five acres or more. Since from the results above there was some damage in a 120 day period. On leach pads five acres or less since they are considered small pads will be inspected every three months.

The chance of cyanide exposure is very low. More people die from cyanide in smoking cigarettes than from leach pad leaks. There is even cyanide in some of the processed foods we eat. Cyanide breaks down very quickly under ultraviolet light or with a base like lime.

Other industries use cyanide but are not as extensively controlled. Some of these industries include paper, textiles, and plastics. It is also used to exterminate pests and rodents in ships and public buildings. Also in mining unlike in the past now we use liquid cyanide instead of powdered which is much safer and for every ton of water we only use a half a pound of cyanide.

The bill will also include proper protection of workers so that they don't get fatally hurt. It would include inspections on gas masks for filtering cyanide gas. Inspections on protective clothing would be mandatory.

We believe that the mine should post a bond for cleanup and repair of their liners. If they don't comply with the law they will be heavily fined. The reserve of money should not just be for if they go bankrupt.

We cannot be narrow minded about what happened twenty years ago with mining incidents. Technology has improved greatly in mining over the past five years.

As I listed on this paper there are ways to mine safely. All we have to do is make sure that we use the latest technology. As Americans in the state of Montana I ask that you support the bill to have inspections of mines and proper repair. By paying close attention we can stop what happened at the Zortman Landusky Mine.

I will support legislation that believes in proper leach mining and worker safety.

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