

State Water Resources Control Board

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STATE WATER BOARD GIVES \$1.6 MILLION TO CLEAN UP POLLUTED WATER AT LEVIATHAN MINE

SACRAMENTO—The State Water Resources Control Board today approved allocating \$1.6 million to the Lahontan Regional Water Board to fund actions to prevent acid mine drainage from being released from the Leviathan Mine Superfund site in Alpine County.

The money, which comes from the state's Cleanup and Abatement Account, will help address a legacy of pollution at the inactive sulfur mine.

In 1984, Leviathan Mine was purchased to clean up water quality problems caused by historic mining. Jurisdiction over the mine rests with the State Water Board, which, in turn has delegated jurisdiction to the Lahontan Water Board. The mine is five miles east of Markleeville.

Acid mine drainage flows into Leviathan and Aspen creeks which has elevated concentrations of dissolved metals, including iron, aluminum, arsenic, nickel, and copper.

In May 2000, the United State's Environmental Protection Agency placed the mine on the federal Superfund Site List. US EPA has named the State as a potentially responsible party and has issued an Administrative Abatement Action (AAA) to the State. The action requires preventing the overflow of acid mine drainage from the storage ponds.

The \$1.6 million will complete three activities during 2007-2008:

- **\$538,000 to complete deferred construction:** The access road to the facility needs to be improved to provide safe and reliable access. In addition, the 7-year-old treatment facility has deteriorated and needs maintenance and improvements.
- **\$567,000 for summer 2007 pond water treatment:** Two years ('04-'05 & '05-'06) of above average precipitation resulted in the need to treat more water to prevent the discharge of untreated acid to Leviathan Creek. This generated more sludge that must be disposed of during the summer of 2007.
- **\$500,000 for 2008 spring pond water treatment:** To prevent untreated overflow during spring snowmelt, additional funding is required to contract for specialized treatment equipment that can mobilize to the site over snow and can operate during the springtime cold weather conditions.

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