

Navajo Nation Reports

**Report on Abandoned Mines to the New Mexico
State Legislature, Indian Affairs Committee**

**Presented by Stephen B. Etsitty, Executive
Director Navajo Nation Environmental
Protection Agency**

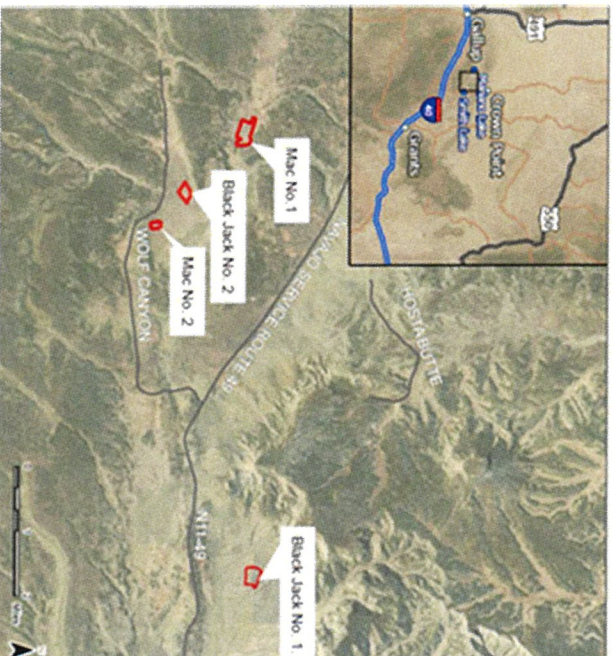
November 30, 2023

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Eastern Navajo Abandoned Uranium Mine Sites Overview

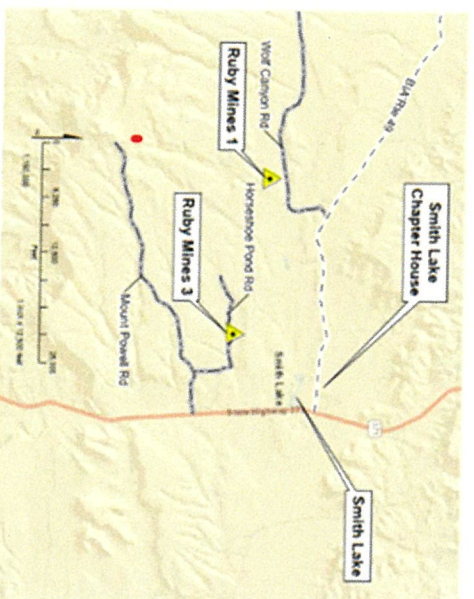
- *Seven Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) Lead mine sites; all in the Engineering and Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) Public Comment period*
- *Three Tronox sites in various stages of the CERCLA process*

Homestake Mining Company



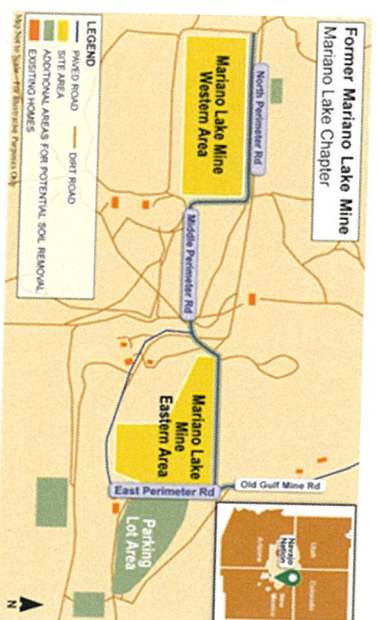
- Four sites in Eastern Navajo with impacts to Trust land and allotment land in Smith Lake and Mariano Lake Chapter communities.
- Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) Alternative Recommended by USEPA:
 - Cap one site in-place, consolidate remaining sites at two regional repositories
 - Minimizes footprints and limits land use restrictions while protecting human health and the environment

Western Nuclear Incorporated (WNI)



- Four sites in Eastern Navajo with impacts to Trust land in Smith Lake and Mariano Lake Chapter communities.
- Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) Alternative Recommended by USEPA:
 - Consolidate and cap in place each sites
 - Minimize impacts to surrounding residents, balance of short and long-term effectiveness, future land use restrictions, caps monitored in perpetuity, protects people and environment.

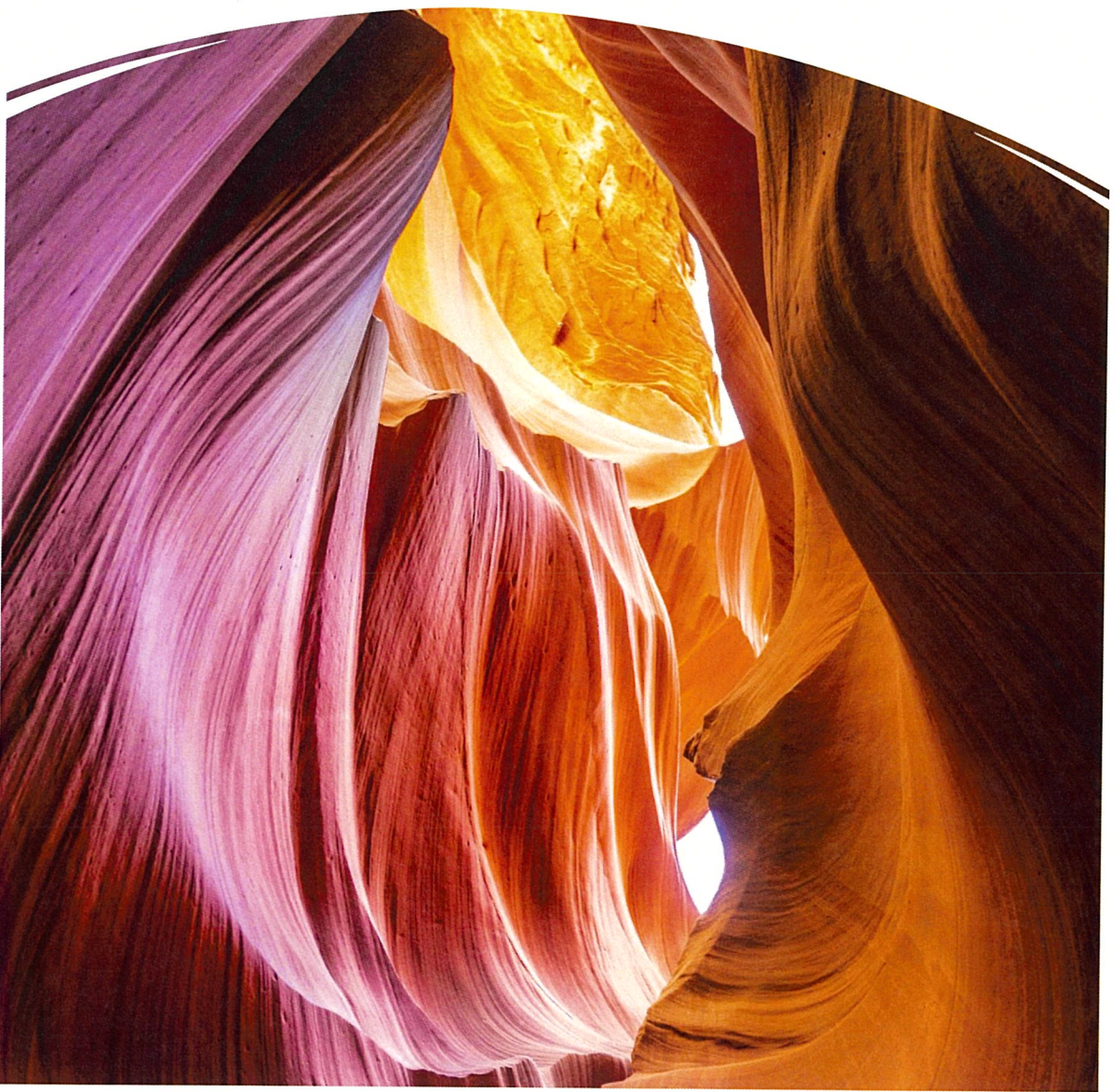
Chevron

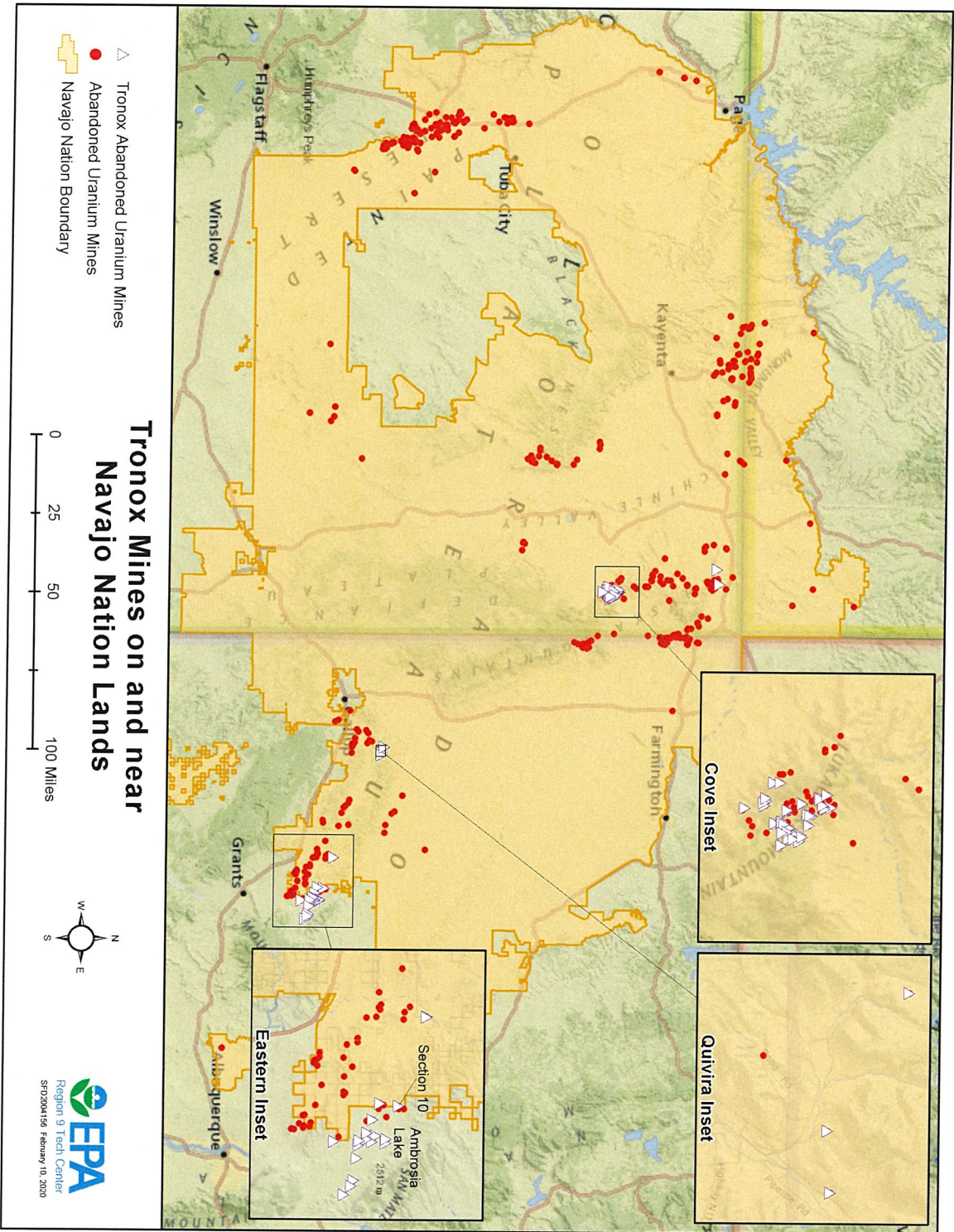


- Two sites in Eastern Navajo with impacts to allotment lands in Mariano Lake Chapter community.
- Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) Alternative Recommended by USEPA:
 - Consolidate both sites at a regional repository in Mariano Lake.
 - Allows unrestricted future land use of both sites, protective of human and environmental health.

Navajo Nation EPA Superfund TRONOX Sites in New Mexico

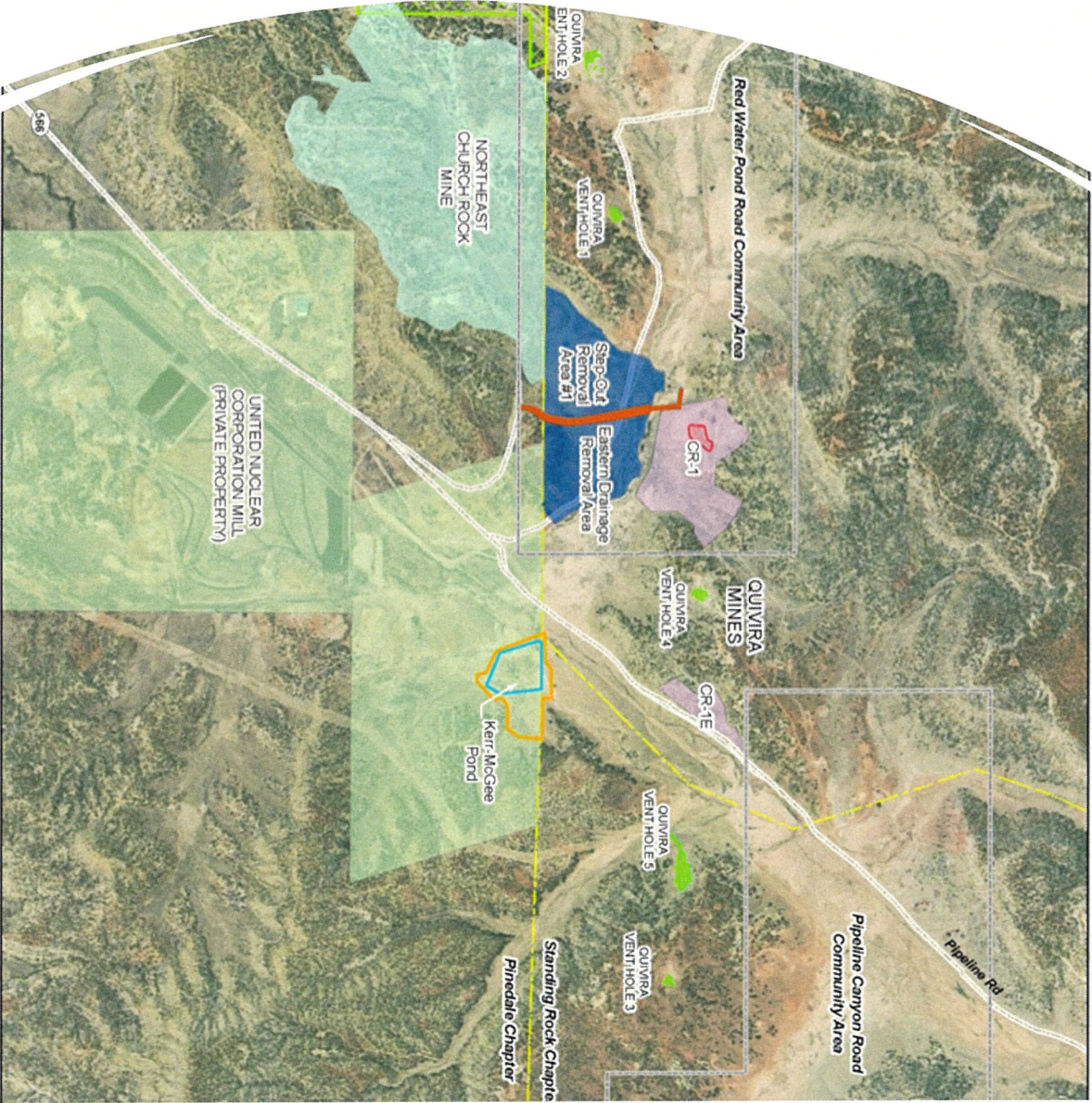
- Northeast Church Rock Mine
- Quivira
- Section 32/33





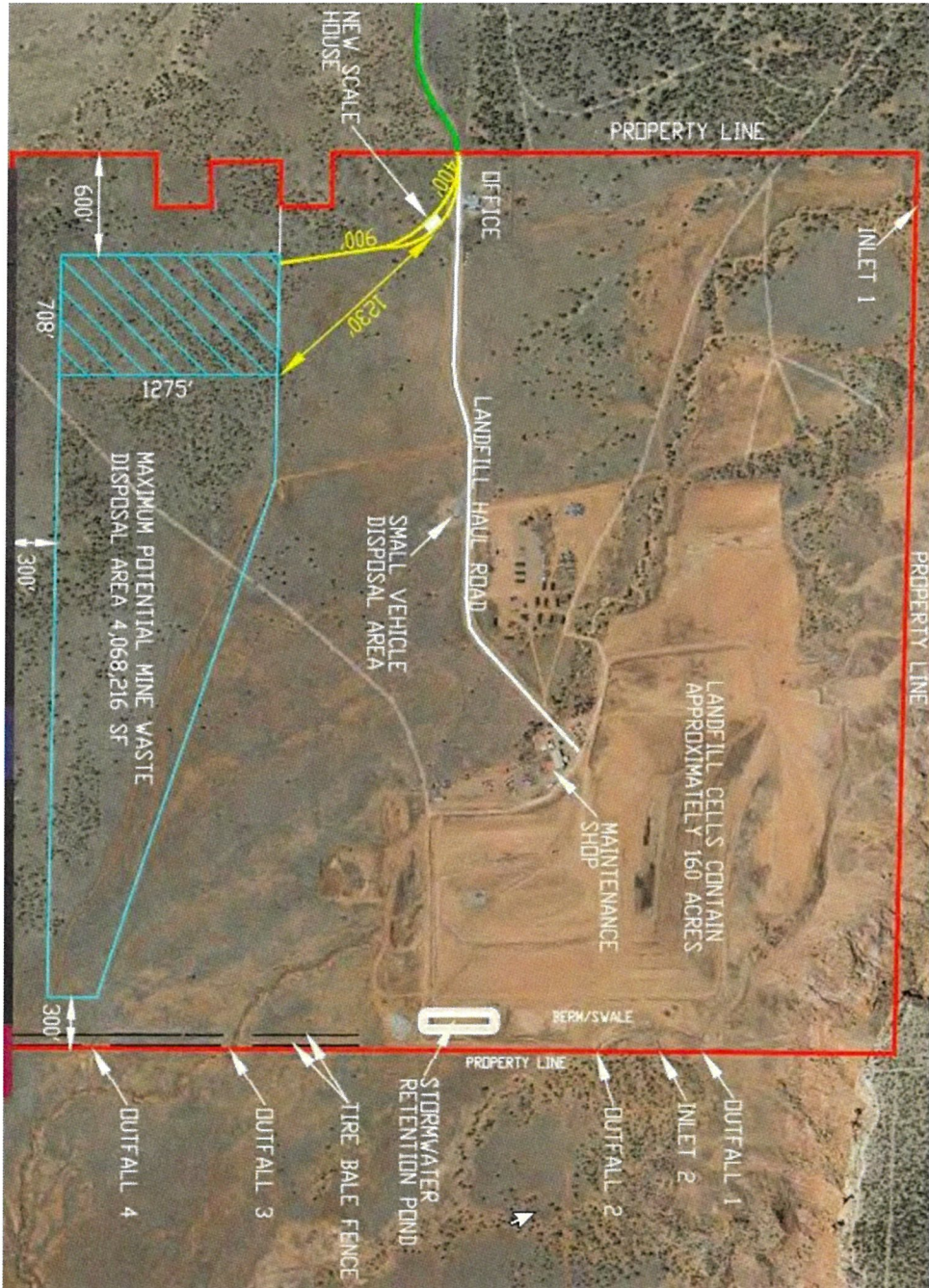
Northeast Church Rock Mine

- Primary NM Communities Impacted : Church Rock, Pinedale, Standing Rock, and Coyote Canyon
- 1 million cubic yards of mine waste will be stored in a permanent repository on the former UNC Mill site
- 2023 – NRC Approved the License Amendment for UNC Mill Site for NECR mine waste
- Currently the UNC Mill Site, UNC/GE will negotiate a consent decree with USEPA; Navajo Nation will be a participant.
- Projecting Construction to begin late Summer 2024



Quivira Mine

- Primary NM Communities impacted : Church Rock, Pinedale, Standing Rock, and Coyote Canyon
- Largest quantity of mine waste on the Navajo Nation. Identified as a high priority due to the proximity of residents; Red Water Pond Road and Pipeline Road Communities
- 2011 – The mine pile was temporarily covered and stabilized
- August 2023 – USEPA completed Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) to evaluate the remedial options
- Proposed disposal at Red Rock Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, in Thoreau, NM, which will require multi-year NMED permitting and approval from the state of NM
 - Additional community outreach is required to gain community acceptance at Thoreau, NM and surrounding communities



Section 32/33

- Primary NM Communities Impacted: Casamero Lake, Prewitt, Baca, as well as Private land/Allotted land
- 2019 – Time Critical Removal Action performed to address immediate hazards
- Currently, in the EE/CA stage involves approximately 74, 000 CY of waste materials to be removed and transferred to Red Rock Municipal Solid Waste Landfill

Proposed Action Items

- NMI continued support for the Red Rock Municipal Solid Waste Landfill to be used for Quivira and Section 32/33 Mine Waste
- NMI support for Federal Agency actions to plan, site, develop and implement a regional Long-Term waste repository for abandoned uranium mine waste from the Navajo Nation, and from other locations in New Mexico
- NMI support for Proposed Amendments to federal CERCLA to improve accountability over Federal Agency commitments contained in the multi-year plan document that spans 2020-2029; authorizes USEPA Office of Mountains, Deserts and Plains; provides directives for developing Long-Term waste repositories for abandoned mine wastes, and improving development of local workforce/local contracting; and identifies the need to develop a funding source for the 293 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation that do not have funds for clean up actions.

Questions?

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