



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 15, 2006
Immediate Release

Contact: Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director
Phone: (505) 827-0314

Environment Department Approves Work Plan to Clean Up Hurley Soils

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has approved a work plan submitted by Chino Mines Co. to clean up soils in the town of Hurley that have been contaminated with copper as a result of former copper concentrator and smelter operations.

The plan includes cleaning up soils in residential yards of property owners in Hurley, near Silver City, that are contaminated with copper in excess of 5,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). All clean up activities will be paid for by the Chino Mines Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of Phelps Dodge Mining. The clean up work is expected to begin March 9, 2006 and will be overseen by NMED.

“This cleanup will help meet the state’s goal of ensuring that the long-term health of the people of Hurley is protected from former smelter operations,” NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. “When this cleanup is complete, the people of Hurley will be able enjoy their property and yards with the confidence that copper contamination is no longer a problem.”

Health studies have shown that ingestion of elevated levels of copper can cause stomach or intestinal distress, as well as kidney and liver damage. The clean up level of 5,000 mg/kg was established in July of 2005 under the Administrative Order on Consent between NMED and Chino Mines Co. This clean up level is consistent with a level recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Prior to beginning clean up activities, the participation will be requested of each property owner in Hurley. Those who volunteer will have their surface soils tested to determine the copper concentration. Soil will then be excavated from areas where copper concentrations are equal to or greater than 5,000 mg/kg. Restoring the properties will involve replacing excavated soils with clean soil and landscaping materials. Removed soils will be transported to an approved disposal location at the Chino Mine.

For further information contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications director, at (505) 827-0314.

###