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## **Sohio Western Mining Company c/o Kennecott Energy Company Proposes Ground Water Investigations at a Former Mine near Laguna Pueblo**

(Grants, NM) – Sohio Western Mining Company (SWMC) -- which operated the JJ Number 1/L-Bar Mine about 2 miles north of Laguna Pueblo -- submitted a proposal to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to conduct a ground water investigation at the former mine.

The Stage 1 abatement plan consists of assessing ground water quality at the mine site. NMED requires the proposed activities at the site because past ground water sampling showed that concentrations of groundwater exceed New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission standards for one or more of the following parameters: uranium, radium, manganese, iron, total dissolved solids, sulfate, and pH. There has been limited site assessment work conducted at the former mine.

The SWMC mine, which is about 4 miles southeast of Seboyeta and two miles northeast of Moquino, operated from 1976 to 1981 in conjunction with the L-Bar uranium mill and associated mill tailings facility. The mine closed between 1986 and 1987. Surface ownership of the mine area, which covers about 600 acres, is held by the Cebolleta Land Grant. A small portion is owned by the Department of Energy.

NMED will seek public comment for 90 days after it receives the company's cleanup plan. The public can comment on Stage 2 of the abatement plan, which will include a proposal for remediating contamination discovered during the Stage 1 assessment.

For more information, call Jerry Schoeppner, Geologist, Ground Water Quality Bureau, New Mexico Environment Department, at (505) 827-0652, or Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475..

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