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**NMED Issues Record of Decision Related to Contaminated Soil from Past Mining at Freeport McMoRan's Chino Mines in Hurley, N.M.**

(Santa Fe, NM) The New Mexico Environment Department issued a Record of Decision on the cleanup of contamination in soil that resulted from past mining at Freeport McMoRan's Chino operations in Hurley, N.M.

The completion of the Interim Remedial Action conducted by Chino drastically reduced the potential risk to children from incidental ingestion of elevated copper concentrations in soil and therefore, no further action beyond the work completed under the IRA is required.

"Chino through this process cleaned up contaminated soil at 523 properties in Hurley," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "Our efforts for the past years have been focused on protecting residents in the area and the environment from the effects of that contamination."

Chino sampled soil from 670 properties in the area. Of those properties, nine that required remediation did not participate in the remediation. The department will conduct reviews every five years to determine whether the cleanup continues to protect public health. The remediation included the excavation of contaminated soil and the replacement of that soil with new soil and landscaping.

The Record of Decision, also called the Proposed Plan for the Hurley Soils Investigation Unit Remedial Investigation, indicated that soil in the town of Hurley contained before the cleanup elevated concentrations of metals, mostly copper, as a result of historic ore processing operations. The Human Health Risk Assessment for the area determined that children may be at risk due to incidental ingestion of copper in soil.

The Chino Administrative Order on Consent between Chino Mines Co., a holding of Freeport McMoRan, and NMED called for the investigation of potential contamination related to historic mining operations and cleanup of contamination in an effort to protect human health and the environment.

Chino Mines Company proposed an Interim Remedial Action plan to remove contaminated soil from Hurley properties in a work plan it submitted to NMED in September 2005. NMED approved that plan in April 2006

and the soil removal was completed in the summer of 2007. Chino submitted in January 2008 an Interim Remedial Action Completion Report that NMED approved in April 2008.

Chino submitted the Hurley Soils Investigation Unit Feasibility Study in February 2007. The study, required by the AOC, compared several possible options for consideration as potential remedial alternatives. One of the options was excavation (soil removal), which was proposed during the Interim Remedial Action Work Plan. Other remedial options evaluated were: 1) No Action; 2) Institutional Controls; 3) Containment; and 4) In-Situ and Ex-Situ Treatment.

NMED developed the draft ROD based on the information provided in the RI, FS, IRACR and other documents in the Administrative Record and selected the No Action Alternative.

The draft ROD was presented at a Public Meeting in Hurley on Oct. 22, 2008. The draft ROD has been revised and finalized based upon comments received from the public and other stakeholders. The final ROD is available in the local document repositories in the Silver City and Bayard Public Libraries and in Miller Library at Western New Mexico University, as well as the NMED Santa Fe Office.

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