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NEWS RELEASE

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State of Utah Lifts Advisories for Utah Crop Irrigation and Livestock Watering

SALT LAKE CITY -- The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) is lifting any advisories against using San Juan River water for crop irrigation and livestock watering. Based on the latest Utah Department of Environmental Quality evaluation of the San Juan River water sample data, Utah State University's veterinary toxicologist reports the river's highest levels of contamination posed no adverse affects on plants, soils and animals, only short-term and minimal exposure risks.

River water sampling shows that the majority of the mine contamination passed through San Juan County on Tuesday, August 11. The UDAF advises farmers and ranchers to remain cautious and report any changes in the health of their crops and livestock.

Utah DEQ hydrologists estimate that the leading edge of the plume from the Gold King Mine spill arrived in Utah somewhere between 8:30 p.m. on August 9 and 8:30 a.m. on August 10. These estimates suggest that the plume first arrived in Lake Powell somewhere between Wednesday night and Thursday morning. It is not currently possible to determine the extent to which the plume was dispersed, and DEQ's Division of Water Quality scientists will continue to evaluate data over the weekend with the hope of shedding light on this question. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov/Topics/Water/goldkingmine/index.htm

DEQ has posted updated data summary tables that include data from Saturday, August 8, through Thursday, August 13. The data reported for August 13 are partial data.

A long-term plan is also under development by the Department of Natural Resources to continue monitoring potential impacts to aquatic wildlife and to ensure fish remain safe to consume. Based on minimal pH and metal concentration changes, DWR is optimistic the native fish will continue to remain healthy and their populations strong.

The Utah Department of Health Environmental Epidemiology Program currently finds that exposure to the contaminants of the San Juan River tested on August 11, 2015, by DEQ are not expected to result in adverse health effects for people recreating in the waters.

Recreational users should continue to carry their own drinking water and not rely on filtering or purifying river waters.

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