



THE NAVAJO NATION

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## **PRESIDENT BEGAYE'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL INVESTIGATION IGNORING U.S. EPA NEGLIGENCE REGARDING GOLD KING MINE SPILL**

Window Rock - President Russell Begaye issued the following statement today on reports that Gold King Mine spill investigators were ordered to "stay clear" of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's negligence. The Daily Caller recently reported that emails obtained by the United States House Committee on Natural Resources suggest that Department of Interior investigators were ordered to avoid issues of EPA negligence.

"The Gold King Mine spill culturally and economically devastated the Navajo Nation, and the federal government's failed response to this crisis has only added insult to injury. The documents obtained by the House Committee on Natural Resources are troubling and suggest that federal agencies investigating the spill have been instructed to turn a blind eye to the extent of the Environmental Protection Agency's negligence. The Navajo Nation has long called for a truly independent investigation of the Gold King Mine Spill and has urged the administration to appoint an independent agency to oversee the response. The recent reports only further reinforce the Nation's concerns about whether the EPA will accept responsibility for this disaster and work to make our people whole again."

"The Navajo Nation has suffered due to the reckless actions of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other responsible parties, and the Obama Administration has turned down virtually every request we have made for greater assistance, each time referring us back to the EPA."

"Despite the federal government's unwillingness to investigate the negligence of the U.S. EPA and other responsible parties, the Navajo Nation is committed to using all legal means possible to obtain full and fair recovery for our people. While this process is ongoing, our leaders in Washington need to ensure our people are compensated quickly and comprehensively."