



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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Nov. 19, 2025

Sonya Germann, state director
Montana-Dakotas BLM Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Director,

A unanimous Environmental Quality Council asks the Bureau of Land Management for a predictable, long-term, annual federal contribution to ongoing remediation of the Zortman-Landusky mines in the Little Rocky Mountains.

The council also expresses its appreciation for the bureau's past and ongoing efforts at the site. In concert with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the bureau's commitment to protecting Montana's natural resources and public health through long-term stewardship is commendable.

As you know, the legacy of cyanide heap-leach gold mining at Zortman-Landusky has left a complex environmental footprint, particularly in terms of acid rock drainage and water contamination. Six water treatment plants must treat over a million gallons of water every day—a process that may extend forever and a cost borne by future generations.

As the Department of Environmental Quality draws down its remediation funds, the council is concerned about the future of federal assistance. The variability and uncertainty of federal funding presents difficulties, as ongoing water treatment and future capital improvements and equipment purchases loom. A predictable contribution would make planning for the future easier.

Without the continued BLM-DEQ partnership, the Zortman-Landusky site poses a threat to human health and the environment in nearby communities, including the Fort Belknap Indian Community.

Thank you again for your dedication to this important work.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Fielder, presiding officer
Environmental Quality Council