

# **Exhibit C**

# Fort Belknap Indian Community



Fort Belknap Agency  
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Fort Belknap Indian Community  
(Tribal Govt.)  
Fort Belknap Indian Community  
(Elected to administer the affairs of the community and  
to represent the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventre  
Tribes of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation)

October 10, 2017

Director Tom Livers  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Director Livers:

As you are aware, the Fort Belknap Indian Community continues to suffer from the devastating impacts of the Zortman and Landusky mines on the land and water quality on and near our reservation. The development of the mines destroyed mountains and polluted the surrounding streams with acid mine drainage. When the mine owner, Pegasus Gold, went bankrupt, it left behind a toxic legacy and crippling financial liabilities for the public. Decades later, the land has not been adequately reclaimed and acid mine drainage continues to run off of the mine site down Swift Gulch and other drainages. It has reached the Fort Belknap Reservation, contaminating one of the Tribes' Sundance sites and our powwow grounds in Mission Canyon. The mine pollution has harmed tribal members' ability to fish and recreate, use the land for ceremonial purposes, and drink from springs that used to provide a source of clean water for tribal members. More profoundly, the mines' desecration of our ceremonial sites and sacred places has had a devastating impact on our people and their cultural ties to the land. As the state is well aware, the bonds for the Zortman and Landusky mines have proven woefully inadequate to cover the costs of reclamation and perpetual water treatment. As a result, our community continues to suffer from the effects of water pollution and scars on the landscape, and there is no end to that suffering in sight.

Given this history, we were very disturbed to learn that one of the principal officers of Pegasus Gold is now proposing to develop two new mining projects in Montana, the Rock Creek and Montanore Mines, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has provided permits for those projects. The principals of Pegasus should not be allowed to profit from new mines while our community continues to struggle with the pollution they left behind at the Zortman and Landusky sites and the inadequate resources available to deal with that pollution. We urge DEQ to suspend the authorizations for the Rock Creek and Montanore Mines unless and until reclamation of the Zortman and Landusky sites is completed and the costs for necessary perpetual water treatment are fully funded.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Azure  
President  
Fort Belknap Indian Community