



Press Release
January 08, 2010

Contacts:

Michael H. Jensen, Co-Chair – (801) 824-3702
Margaret Uzelac, Co-Chair – (801) 250-1334

For Immediate Release:

Final Report Approved For the Kennecott Tailings Impoundment

The Salt Lake County Kennecott Tailings Impoundment Committee is pleased to announce that a final report of the seismic stability and run out analysis of the South East corner of the Utah Kennecott Copper Tailings Impoundment is available. The final report is intended to give citizens of Magna an independent review of the seismic stability of the Kennecott Tailings Impoundment.

Co-Chair Michael Jensen stated “the study shows that no residential structures, including those close to the embankment, are in danger of run out from the embankment. This is at the heart of most of the concerns from the community and we as a committee are relieved by these findings”.

The Committee approved the report on Friday, from the independent Geotechnical Engineering firm Tetra Tech, Inc. The study results indicate good agreement with previous studies for post-earthquake stability of the southeast corner of the embankment. Previous analyses performed to predict the post-earthquake stability of the southeast corner of the facility was also found to be appropriate in methodology. The methods used are considered slightly more conservative and resulted in a thicker liquefaction zone in some areas of the study sections. However, this did not result in a significant reduction of stability in a post-earthquake scenario. The estimated run out from the southern section evaluated under the post-Maximum Credible Earthquake condition may extend across Highway 201 and slightly onto the adjacent golf course south of the highway. Run out from the east side under the extreme failure scenario would be contained within Kennecott property.

The report indicates that in the event of an earthquake greater than 6.5 at the site of the impoundment, a failure of the impoundment is possible. The result of a failure of the impoundment would trigger safety responses that would allow traffic time to divert to other routes. The data shows that the impoundment is presently safe for 6.5 magnitude earthquakes and below. Dewatering efforts within the impoundment will continue to lessen the effects of a slope failure and improve stability as water levels within the closed impoundment continue to drop.

The Salt Lake County Kennecott Tailings Impoundment Committee is comprised of 12 Community Members and 5 Elected Officials that represent the Magna Community. The Committee is further staffed with geotechnical and tailings experts. We would like to thank all the committee members and volunteers involved in this process. A special thanks to our volunteer Geotechnical experts John Wallace from GeoEnvironmental Services, Inc. and Jack Hamilton from the University of Utah. We are also grateful to Kennecott for their cooperation and information provided throughout this study. There has been a great deal of public comment which has added to the independence of this study.

A copy of the final report can be found at www.magnatailingsstudy.slco.org