



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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September 13, 1991

Mr. Menco Coppinga, President
North Emery Water Users Association
P.O. Box 418
Elmo, Utah 84521

Dear Mr. Coppinga:

Re: Citizen's Complaint-Birch Springs, Co-Op Mining Company, Bear Canyon Mine, ACT/015/025, Folder #2 & Citizen's Complaint File, Emery County, Utah

Your letter from the North Emery Water User's Association (NEWUA), received August 12, 1991, stated that the Southeastern Utah Health District (SEUHD) had requested that Birch Springs be removed from the NEWUA water system due to unacceptable levels of fecal coliform.

In response to your letter, on August 14, 1991, two hydrologists from the Division visited Birch Springs and the following observations were made: 1) water was observed flowing out of the overflow pipe from the collection box at the time of the site visit, and 2) a marmot was observed in the fractured rocks above the area of the spring collection system.

On August 20, 1991, the Division hydrologists collected water samples with NEWUA personnel to sample for bacterial contamination. NEWUA submitted one sample to the SEUHD laboratory while the Division submitted one sample to the SEUHD and one sample to Commercial Testing and Engineering Lab (CTE) near Huntington. The results were:

<u>SAMPLE OWNER</u>	<u>LABORATORY</u>	<u>RESULTS</u> <u>FECAL COLIFORM/TOTAL COLIFORM</u>
NEWUA	SEUHD	0/0
DOGM	SEUHD	positive for total Coliform
DOGM	CTE	0/0

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The results are inconclusive and the possible contamination is from an undefined source. Possible sources could be local mammal populations (marmots, rodents, deer, etc.) or from recent heavy rainfall in the area, which could have moved bacteria from the watershed above the cliffs down to the spring collection system.

The Division finds that there is insufficient data to support the allegation that the contamination was caused by Co-Op Mining Company operations.

If you have any further questions, please call me.

Sincerely,



Pamela Grubaugh-Littig
Permit Supervisor

jbe
cc: Wendell Owen
Dianne Nielson
Lowell Braxton
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