State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

Norman H. Bangerter
Governor
Dee C. Hansen
Executive Director
Dianne R. Nielson, Ph.D.
Division Director

355 West North Temple
3 Triad Center, Suite 350
Salt Lake City, Utah 84180-1203
801-538-5340

DOGM
MINERALS PROGRAM
FILE COPY

April 19, 1989

CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT
P 001 717 848

Mr. Brent Willoughby
Hecla Mining Company
P.O. Box 310
Enterprise, Utah 84725

Dear Mr. Willoughby:

Re: Waterfowl Mortalities on the Tailings Dam, Escalante Silver Mine, Hecla Mining Company, M/021/004, Iron County, Utah

In response to a public complaint, Scott Johnson of my staff and Douglas Messerly of Wildlife Resources inspected the tailings impoundment at the Escalante Mine. The inspection was conducted on Friday, April 14, 1989 at 2:00 p.m. Bill Truman, a representative of Hecla Mining Company, accompanied the State officials during the inspection.

Eighteen birds were found dead along the shore of the impoundment. Several other live birds were observed in the water. Mr. Truman said that he had walked the shore and disposed of dead birds on Tuesday. This indicates the observed mortalities occurred in the three-day period preceding the inspection.

This waterfowl death rate is unacceptable. Mitigation measures must be implemented **immediately** to prevent further mortalities. Although propane cannons are presently being used, the effectiveness of these devices is minimal. Two suggested permanent solutions for addressing this problem are:

a) neutralize and maintain the pond solution to a cyanide level below 50 ppm; or
b) install bird netting above the pond to prevent birds from landing on the water.

Interim mitigative steps must be taken between now and the time a permanent solution is presented to and approved by the Division. These interim steps must include 24 hour hazing by manual patrol. Additionally, records must be kept of birds killed at the site. These records must include the bird species and date of death. A written plan detailing a permanent solution to this problem must be received by this office no later than April 28, 1989. Do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lowell P. Braxton
Administrator
Mineral Resource Development
and Reclamation Program

jb
cc: Wayne Hedberg, Permit Lead
Holland Shepherd, Soils Specialist
Scott Johnson, Reclamation Engineer
MN18/69-70