

To: Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]
From: EPA Press Office
Sent: Mon 11/6/2017 4:00:11 PM
Subject: EPA's New Region 8 Boss Off To A Promising Start

Among the other choices are: Jennifer McPartland, a senior scientist of the Environmental Defense Fund; Kari Cutting of the North Dakota Petroleum Council; Tim Wallington of Ford and Bart Croes of the California Air Resources Board.

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MONTANA STANDARD

EPA's New Region 8 Boss Off To A Promising Start

Montana Standard Editorial
November 5, 2017

http://mtstandard.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-epa-s-new-region-boss-off-to-a-promising/article_ce3b2023-257f-591d-95aa-65e80931bafa.html

Since Butte was added to the Superfund National Priorities List in 1983, we've gone through six presidents, 14 EPA administrators (acting and permanent) and more than half a dozen Region 8 EPA administrators.

The latest to sit at the Region 8 desk is Doug Benevento, a Colorado attorney who has been an energy executive and has also run the state's Department of Public Health and Environment.

Fortunately, in the first three weeks of his tenure, he has done precious little sitting. Instead he has been traveling to learn firsthand about EPA's challenges in the region, which are too lengthy to list.

It's no accident that he spent four of his first 16 days in office in Montana. We are pleased to note that he spent intensive time with Gov. Steve Bullock, DEQ boss Tom Livers and their staffs. He also came to Butte this past Wednesday, and made a very good impression. He did not condescend. He came off as self-effacing, sincere and straightforward.

Perhaps the best thing Benevento said during his short visit was that he realized it was too short and is therefore coming back in a couple of weeks.

While that visit will focus more on the considerable issues EPA faces in Anaconda, he did indicate he would also return to Butte. On Nov. 14, The Montana Standard and Restore Our Creek Coalition will co-sponsor a rally at the Covellite Theatre. It should surprise no one that the central message that evening will be: Clean it up. Restore our Creek. Get it done.

We sincerely hope Benevento's return visit will include his presence at this event, which would enable him to hear very directly from the community. We urge him – and you – to attend.

Benevento clearly wishes to communicate clearly and move quickly. He said he hopes to have a Butte Priority Soils consent decree in place by early next year, and if that's not possible, he said, EPA stands ready to enforce the law and move the cleanup along with a unilateral administrative order.

That mirrors EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's stated intention to move cleanups along more quickly.

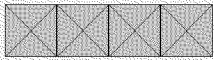
While a burst of speed would certainly be welcome after three decades of glacial Superfund progress, speed alone won't be enough to do right by this town. If speed means taking the cheapest, most expedient path, Butte may never recover.

Any remedy, whether agreed upon by the state, county, EPA and Atlantic Richfield or unilaterally imposed by EPA, must be substantive. In other words, the pollutants must come out of the ground and out of the water. Overbroad "technical impracticability" zones or more "waste in place" patch jobs will not suffice. The quality of Butte's cleanup will define the town's future. A quick "get out of town" deal would be even more harmful than the plodding progress the town has endured so far.

With all of those caveats, Benevento's resolve, forthrightness – and presence in Butte – are all excellent signs. We applaud him for getting his tenure off to a very promising start.

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