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Statement on Pavillion, Wyoming groundwater investigation

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Contact Information: Richard Mylott, USEPA Region 8, 303-312-6654; Renny MacKay, State of Wyoming, 307-777-7437; Eastern Shoshone Business Council 307-332-3532; Northern Arapaho Business Council, 307-332-6120

Following recent discussions, Wyoming Governor Matthew H. Mead, the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes, and U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson issued the following statement about groundwater issues in the area east of Pavillion, Wyoming:

We believe that collaboration and use of the best available science are critical in meeting the needs of Pavillion area residents and resolving longstanding issues surrounding the safety of drinking water and groundwater.

The State of Wyoming is committed to providing the citizens with a long-term source of safe drinking water and the EPA commends the State for its commitment. The Agency will work with the State, the Tribes and the rural community east of Pavillion to find the long-term and affordable drinking water solution.

The EPA, the State of Wyoming, and the Tribes recognize that further sampling of the deep monitoring wells drilled for the Agency's groundwater study is important to clarify questions about the initial monitoring results. The EPA will partner with the State and the United States Geological Survey (USGS), in collaboration with the Tribes, to complete this sampling as soon as possible and will collaborate with the State and other stakeholders in designing the sampling methodology, the quality assurance plan, and other features of the next phase of testing.

In order to ensure that the results of this next phase of testing are available for the peer review process, to which the Agency has committed, the EPA has agreed to delay convening the peer review panel on the draft Pavillion report until a report containing the USGS data is publicly available. The State of Wyoming and the Tribes appreciate this decision. In the meantime, EPA's draft report will continue to be open to public comment.

Together with the Tribes, the EPA and the State will convene a group of stakeholders and experts to develop and carry out a plan for further investigation of the Pavillion gas field to identify potential risks to drinking water, including possible sources and pathways for the migration of contaminants. Additional research will be conducted collaboratively using the highest scientific standards and will be subjected to independent peer review.

We are committed to ensuring the peer review process is conducted with maximum transparency and the highest level of scientific integrity.

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