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05.03.2023

TESTER PRESSES EPA ADMINISTRATOR ON SUPERFUND CLEANUP, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

***SENATOR BLASTS BIDEN
ADMINISTRATION FOR IGNORING
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK, SECURES
COMMITMENT THAT EPA WILL
WORK WITH COMMUNITY
MEMBERS***

Tester Presses EPA Administrator on Superfund Cleanup, Community E...



U.S. Senator Jon Tester today pressed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael Regan on the Biden Administration's failure to take community feedback into account when proceeding with Superfund cleanups. Tester specifically condemned the EPA's lack of engagement with the community in Butte, which was declared a Federal Superfund Site in 1983 due to the damage caused by over a century of mining and smelting, and secured a commitment from Administrator Regan that EPA would take feedback from Butte residents into account as the Agency moves forward with cleanup efforts.

"I've been in Democrat and Republican Administrations, and they both tend to play games," said Tester. **"The truth is we don't play games with Superfund Sites."**

Tester specifically cited community members' frustration regarding progress on the Superfund cleanup in Butte, Montana.

"Two nights ago, there was a community meeting where residents of Butte had the opportunity to express concerns about the lack of progress in effectively cleaning up the community. The readout

from the meeting couldn't be clearer. Folks are frustrated with the process...I'll be blunt. Mr. Administrator, you need to fix it. You need to make sure this agency is listening to folks on the ground. If it's happening in Butte, it's happening everywhere."

Finally, Tester called out the EPA for its poor track record of listening to community feedback when it comes to cleaning up Federal Superfund Sites and emphasized the need to consider independent science.

"So I just want to tell you this has been going on for a while – I mean like a long time, like before I got here and even longer – and I don't think the EPA has done a good job of listening to people any time in that period. You know, because there are two ways to listen. You can listen and ignore or you can listen and take that feedback and try to do something positive for the community. That's what I want you to do."

Tester has been Montana's leading advocate for toxic-exposed communities and has kept the pressure on the Biden administration to take community feedback when working to address the lasting effects of exposure. In June of 2021 (<https://www.testersenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/pr-8375/>), Tester pressed Administrator Regan on better asbestos regulation and the potential for an asbestos ban in light of the long-term health effects of the use of the toxic substance in Libby.

And last May, Tester secured \$15 million (<https://www.testersenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/pr-9099/>) through his bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* (https://www.testersenate.gov/?p=press_release&id=8721) for 11 Montana pollution cleanup projects. Tester also secured \$1.232 billion (<https://www.testersenate.gov/wp-admin/post.php?post=71388&action=edit>) through the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) government funding package for the Superfund account to clean up sites, including Butte, Libby, Columbia Falls, and the Smurfit-Stone site near Missoula. This was a \$27 million increase over FY22 funding.