



# United States Department of the Interior

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CASO PNRS



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## Memorandum

**To:** Director (707), Room 3529, MIB

**From:** State Director, California

**Subject:** PNRS Atlas Asbestos Mine Site

Earlier this year we had communicated that we felt the Atlas Asbestos Mine Site should be removed from the Preliminary Natural Resources Survey (PNRS) list. Now after further consideration we feel the Atlas National Priority List (NPL) hazardous material site may warrant having a PNRS undertaken. While the Atlas NPL site occupies only a small portion of a larger area, which is a naturally occurring chrysotile asbestos source and is somewhat erosive, there is no doubt there is asbestos moving from the area to downstream and downwind locations. Public lands are located in both the source areas and the migration areas. Transported asbestos and other sediments from the source areas may be contributing to stream channel changes and water quality impacts on public lands.

This movement of materials, asbestos in particular, may affect public land riparian zones and wildlife found on public lands. Asbestos transported from or across the public lands eventually deposits in downstream private lands near Coalinga and the California Aqueduct. The issues which arise from this situation are well documented and are addressed by the ongoing Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS).

The many disturbed areas within the New Idria Formation and the Atlas Mine Site appear to be a major contributing factor to the elevated asbestos levels. However, revegetation and rehabilitation of these areas will be a technical challenge due



to the unique soil conditions. To date, revegetation efforts on these areas have met with little success due to the natural soil nutrient imbalance of the area.

The preparation of a PNRS for the Atlas Mine Site may be relatively straight forward due to the information gathered during the RI/FS.

*Ed Huntz*

cc: DM, Bakersfield  
AM, Hollister RA  
Bill Allen, OEPR