

Statement Regarding Long-Term Reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emissions By Kennecott Copper

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When I was Mayor of Salt Lake City, the SL Tribune brought in a new editor, Nancy Conway, who is still the editor of the newspaper. When we met the first time over lunch, she asked me what I viewed as the most important local issue. I replied that, without any doubt, the most pressing problem -- in terms of the environment, public health, and long-term economic development -- is our poor air quality. She replied that because of a respiratory problem, she was looking at homes in Park City. I exclaimed, "Isn't that amazing that our air is so poor that the editor of our city's largest daily newspaper may have to live outside the city!"

Also during my time as Mayor, I made it clear that I see the most pressing problem for our planet to be the vast disruption of our climate as a result of the emission of billions of tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and into our oceans, the acidification of which is rapidly threatening much of the sea life upon which much of humankind depends.

Now as Executive Director of High Road for Human Rights, I have called, and continue to call, upon governments, non-governmental organizations, industry, and the public to recognize the severe threat of climate change to the fundamental human rights of hundreds of millions of people worldwide, including in the Intermountain West.

Instead of focusing on science and solutions, many people and corporations have endeavored to transform the issue of climate change into a partisan political issue. It has been refreshing to know that Rio Tinto, a major industry that can provide leadership in the business community, is unequivocal in "accept[ing] the urgent need for climate change action and

recogniz[ing] the issue as being one of our greatest challenges and opportunities.”

Rio Tinto has stated “ We believe that emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) resulting from human activities are contributing to climate change. Avoiding human-caused changes to the climate is an important international goal. In order to achieve this goal the world needs reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases.”

Not only has Rio Tinto called for federal legislation that will place a price on carbon emissions; it has committed in its own operations to take the steps necessary to significantly reduce the emissions of GHGs.

Consistent with its call for real change, Rio Tinto, known in Utah as Kennecott, is now planning to take measures that will reduce dangerous criteria pollutants and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, while expanding its operations. Those who maintain that we can't grow our economy and our industrial output without an increase in pollution should pay heed to what Rio Tinto is doing in Utah.

Right now, Kennecott obtains 90% of its energy from the burning of coal. With the changes now being contemplated, it will reduce that reliance upon coal to about 20%, utilizing, instead, natural gas, which will result in better local air quality and in significantly fewer carbon emissions. By 2017, there will be an annual reduction of 430,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions.

This is great progress, but we cannot let up. We will continue to push for even greater advances, including the utilization of clean renewable sources of electricity, such as solar, wind, and geothermal, as well as greater efficiencies that will result in reduced energy demands.

We must celebrate progress, even when more can be done. I congratulate Rio Tinto and Kennecott for its extensive, on-going dialogue with representatives of area environmental organizations and with High Road for Human Rights, which focuses on the worsening climate crisis as a major human rights challenge.

While celebrating progress like that being made by Rio Tinto and Kennecott, we all need to raise the bar in every way possible, protecting the public health and human rights through cleaner air and vigorously combating catastrophic climate change. Let us call upon every corporation, every government official, and every individual to take urgent and effective measures to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, the negative impacts on our environment, public health, and basic human rights.