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April 10, 2024

Sisay Ashenafi
Regional TAG coordinator
EPA Region 8
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop St.
Denver, CO 80202-1129

Dear Sisay,

I am writing to express the Environmental Quality Council's support for the Coalition for a Clean CFAC's grant application to the Environmental Protection Agency's Technical Assistance Grant program.

The Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant plant has been a source of concern for the surrounding community due to its historical operations and the release of hazardous substances into the environment, specifically cyanide, fluoride, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The potential risks associated with historical contamination at this site underscore the need for an effective remediation strategy that protects public health and the environment.

The Coalition for a Clean CFAC has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing environmental issues in their community. A Technical Assistance Grant would ensure the coalition has the expertise and resources necessary to provide a thorough understanding of the contamination and clean-up options at the CFAC plant.

By supporting this grant application, the EPA can leverage the expertise of local stakeholders and empower communities to actively participate in the cleanup and restoration of contaminated sites. The council believes that a made-in-Montana (or made-in-Columbia Falls) solution would foster a local sense of ownership and commitment, while adding flexibility and adaptability in case of changing circumstances. Additionally, funding a grant aligns with the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment and demonstrates the agency's commitment to engaging with and supporting communities affected by hazardous waste sites.

The council urges the EPA to approve the Coalition for a Clean CFAC's grant application and provide the necessary funding to support their important work. Investing in this study will enable their community to better understand and address the environmental challenges associated with cleanup of the CFAC plant and move towards a more sustainable and healthy future.

The Environmental Quality Council thanks you for considering this request. We look forward to your favorable response and to future collaboration between the EPA and the Coalition for a Clean CFAC.

Sincerely,

Rep. Steve Gunderson, chairman
Cc: Matthew Dorrington, remedial project manager
U.S. EPA/CFAC
Eastern end of Aluminum Drive
Columbia Falls, MT 59912