

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION

CLEANUP & ABATEMENT ORDER NO. 81-100
BLAIR BROTHERS RANCH MINING OPERATION
NORTHWEST OF ESSEX
San Bernardino County

The Executive Officer of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region, finds that:

1. Brownstone Mining Company, hereinafter also referred to as the discharger, P.O. Box 215, Lone Pine, CA 93545, has operated Blair Brothers Ranch Mine since 1979. Said mine is located in the SE 1/4 of Section 34, T10N, R14E, SBB&M. Mining activity has occurred intermittently since 1979.
2. The Regional Board adopted waste discharge requirements for the mining operation on May 9, 1979, in Order No. 79-52. Said requirements were adopted for the discharger to use cyanide to process about 8,000 tons of mine tailings contained in two shallow earthen basins which remain from a previous mining operation.
3. The waste discharge requirements provide as follows:
 - A. Discharge Specifications
 1. Neither the treatment nor the discharge of wastewater shall create a pollution or a nuisance as defined in Division 7 of the California Water Code.
 2. There shall be no surface flow of wastewater away from the processing area, and there shall be no discharge to any drainage channel.
 3. All drainage and collection facilities used to contain or transport cyanide solution shall be effectively sealed to prevent exfiltration.
 4. A minimum freeboard of at least two (2) feet shall be maintained in the holding basins.
 5. Adequate measures shall be taken to assure that flood or surface drainage waters do not erode or otherwise render portions of the facilities inoperable.
 6. There shall be no discharge of wastewater containing any trace of cyanide at this location.
 7. Ore tailings and wastewater shall be completely neutralized before being discharged to the basins.
 8. All industrial containers and other industrial waste materials shall be discharged at a Class I waste

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disposal site, or shall be neutralized and discharged at a Class II-2 disposal site provided said discharged wastes are immediately covered.. All containers shall be rendered unusable prior to final disposal.

9. Adequate measures shall be taken to assure that unauthorized persons and animal pets are effectively excluded from the processing area.
4. On January 16, 1980, the Board staff inspected Blair Brothers Mine and found the following:
 - a. Basins used to contain cyanide solution were not properly sealed and storm water runoff was flowing over the liner and seeping into the berm violating requirement A.3.
 - b. The minimum freeboard was less than one foot in violation of requirement A. 4.
 - c. Adequate flood protection for the facilities were non-existent in violation of requirement A.5..
5. On July 21, 1981, The Regional Board staff conducted an inspection of the Blair Brothers Mine and took samples from various locations of the subject site. The results of analyses are as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Total Cyanide</u>
Surface of lined pond containing mining tailings	1710 mg/l(ppm)
One foot beneath surface of lined pond containing mining tailings	190 mg/l(ppm)
Leaking drum marked NaCN (apparently containing charcoal)	1749 mg/l(ppm)
Open drum containing charcoal material	882 mg/l(ppm)
Tailings located below basins	9 mg/l(ppm)

The results shown above indicate that the operation is in violation of requirements A.6, A.7 and A.8. The Board staff inspection of the Blair Brothers Ranch Mining Operation site also revealed several other violations of the waste discharge requirements as follows:

- a. Surface runoff has flowed through the basin and onto the surrounding ground surface violating requirement A.2.
- b. The fence around ponds was partially down in violation of requirement A.9.

6. To this date Brownstone Mining Company has not submitted Monthly Monitoring reports violating provision B.1. of Order No. 79-52 and has failed to comply with the Regional Board letters of March 19, 1981, and July 2, 1981, requesting submittal of a report on the status of mining operations, neutralization procedure, and other information necessary to evaluate compliance of the mining operation with Order No. 79-52.
7. This enforcement action is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et. seq.) in accordance with Section 2714, Chapter 3, Title 14, California Administrative Code.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to Section 13304 of Division 7 of the California Water Code, Brownstone Mining Company shall:

1. Take all necessary actions to immediately abate further violation of Order No. 79-52.
2. All industrial wastes and containers shall be removed from the site in accordance with Discharge Specification A.8. of Order No. 79-52 by February 1, 1982.
3. All mine tailings and other cyanide-contaminated materials shall be neutralized and/or removed to a Board approved solid waste disposal site by February 1, 1982.
4. Upon completion of neutralization and/or removal of all cyanide-contaminated wastes, the discharger shall collect and analyze samples of materials left on site to prove that no cyanide compounds remain. The discharger shall arrange for a Regional Board staff member to witness the collection of samples to be analyzed.
5. Submit to the Regional Board by March 15, 1982, a technical report detailing all actions taken to achieve compliance with Order No. 79-52. The report shall include the neutralization and/or removal procedure of all cyanide-contaminated wastes, and the results of all cyanide analyses.

Failure to comply with this Order as directed may result in referral to the Attorney General for appropriate legal action without further notice.

December 23, 1981
DATE

Alton Sevajan
EXECUTIVE OFFICER