



MINERAL
POLICY

C E N T E R

*Protecting
Communities
and the
Environment*

COUNTING SHEEP JUST GOT A LOT LESS RESTFUL

1872 Mining Law Fact #19:



Toxic waste recently killed more than 300 sheep grazing near an old hardrock mine site in Idaho. After only 6 days of eating near the mine, the sheep died from selenium poisoning. And it's not the first time—horses and even more sheep fell victim to selenium poisoning at the same site in 2001.

In humans, overexposure to selenium can cause loss of hair, tooth decay and discoloration, fatigue, liver damage, spleen damage and loss of feeling and control in arms and legs.

One of many toxics generated in massive quantities at hardrock sites, more than 3 million pounds of selenium were released by mines in 2001, according to the EPA's latest data. And multinational mining companies released 2.8 billion pounds of toxic poisons overall into America's environment—more than any other industry.

You'd think all this pollution and contamination would have these companies feeling sheepish. Yet the 1872 Mining Law has no pollution limits or clean-up requirements.

It's enough to keep anyone from getting a good night's sleep.

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Part of a series on the 1872 Mining Law, highlighting impacts on taxpayers, community health, and water resources—and the need for meaningful reform.

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