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CONTACT: Caroline Oppleman, Public Information Officer, (602) 771-2215, co2@azdeq.gov

ADEQ Update – Colorado Gold King Mine Spill

*ADEQ and cooperating agencies report Lake Powell is safe
for all uses and encourage Lake Powell recreation.*

PHOENIX (September 3, 2015) – As the Labor Day holiday weekend approaches, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) officials announced today that their analysis of water entering Lake Powell shows that the lake is safe for normal uses.

“ADEQ wants Arizona residents and visitors to know that Lake Powell is safe for Labor Day recreational activities including swimming and boating,” said ADEQ Water Quality Division Director Trevor Baggiore. “ADEQ and the multiple cooperating agencies are reviewing and analyzing new information as it becomes available as part of our everyday work to protect Arizona’s waters,” he added.

Scientists and specialists from several Arizona agencies have been and are continuing to monitor and assess data related to the mine spill. Arizona’s cooperating agencies agree that Lake Powell and the downstream Colorado River are safe for all uses including recreation and agriculture as well as a drinking water source for public water systems.

To establish baseline water quality, ADEQ conducted water quality sampling on August 12, 2015. Test results of these samples are consistent with historic water quality data from Lee’s Ferry (downstream of Glen Canyon Dam). These results, along with ADEQ’s data analysis of water entering Lake Powell (San Juan River test data collected by Utah) are available for review on the Arizona cooperating agencies’ Gold King Mine spill information website: <https://ein.az.gov/gold-king-mine-spill-response>, located on the Arizona Emergency Information Network (AZEIN) website.

As part of the ongoing water quality monitoring and assessment work, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is collecting and testing fish tissue and water quality samples from the Arizona portion of Lake Powell. As new test results become available, ADEQ will compare them with Arizona surface water quality standards and historical data to support water quality protection efforts and continue to share updated information on the AZEIN website.

About ADEQ

Established by the Arizona Legislature under the Environmental Quality Act of 1986, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is the state agency for protecting and enhancing public health and the environment of Arizona.

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